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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

CANADIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: A CASE STUDY  
OF THE PROCESS OF POLICY-MAKING FOR IRAQI  
REFUGEES

A Thesis Submitted to

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies

under the supervision of Dr. Ray Jureidini

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts

by Mia Gauthier

BA, Queen's University, 2002

May 2010

The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**CANADIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
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to

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Migration and Refugee Studies

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **CANADIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE PROCESS OF POLICY-MAKING FOR IRAQI REFUGEES**

by

Mia Gauthier

The American University in Cairo

The purpose of this research is to understand how the Canadian government came to decide when was the opportune time to begin the resettlement of Iraqis, what magnitude these resettlement operations would take, and whom, amongst the millions of Iraqis displaced by the war following the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, would be selected for resettlement to Canada. The research identifies different sets of influences on the policy-making process related to the resettlement of Iraqi refugees to Canada, and explores how these resettlement policies were initiated, developed, implemented, and shaped over time. A literature review is undertaken on the history of the rationale supporting the use of resettlement as a possible durable solution to refugee crises. Expert interviews were conducted with representatives of the Government of Canada, UNHCR Ottawa, Amnesty International Canada, the Canadian Council for Refugees, Iraqi community organizations in Canada, and other experts in the field, in order to collect factual accounts, as well as personal and institutional perspectives on the topic. It was found that the most delimiting factor was the budget allocated to the resettlement program, determined by the Canadian Parliament. In turn, the Parliament was said to be most influenced, on the one hand, by the insistently expressed opinions of Canadian voters, and, on the other, by the necessity to retain Canada's humanitarian image. Where and how the budget is spent is highly dependent upon the directives of UNHCR. The budget is also allocated strategically in order to maximize the leverage of resettlement operations for all those affected – refugee populations and asylum countries alike.

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

AIC	Amnesty International Canada
ARM	Action Réfugiés Montréal
CBSA	Canadian Border Services Agency
CCR	Canadian Council for Refugees
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GAR	Government-Assisted Refugee
ICC	Iraqi Community Center of Montreal
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFR	Iraqi Federation of Refugees
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
IRO	International Refugee Organization
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
ISAP	Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
JAS	Joint Assistance Program
MIO	Migration Integrity Officers
PSR	Private Sponsorship or Refugees Program or Privately Sponsored Refugee
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program
RRM	Refugee Resettlement Model
Source Country	Country of origin
SPO	Service Provider Organization
UNHCR/	United Nations Commissioner for Refugees

(the) Agency

UPP                      Urgent Protection Program

1951 Convention      1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

1967 Protocol          1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees

## **INTRODUCTION**

A number of authors have looked at how refugee resettlement policies of a given country are formed and how they evolve. Refugee resettlement was a preferred durable solution to refugee crises, and the subject of many studies from the late seventies to the early nineties, after which it became less frequently applied by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the main resettlement countries of the time. In the late eighties and nineties, two other possible durable solutions to refugee crises took precedence: local integration in the country of first asylum, and voluntary repatriation to the country of origin. In the context of the resettlement operations that took place following the Second World War, and until the end of the large-scale resettlement of the Vietnamese boat people in the 1980s and early 90s, resettlement countries tended to accept large numbers of individuals under their refugee resettlement programs according to the populations' need for resettlement as determined by UNHCR. Lippert and others<sup>1</sup> outlined some of the reasons for a change in the trend of mass refugee resettlement operations, such as the weakening of the economies of the potential resettlement states, and the ensuing difficulties for these states to justify to their citizens the intake and financial and social support of these vulnerable populations. Such factors, among others, have since brought these states and UNHCR to prioritize the implementation of other durable solutions to refugee crises over resettlement.

However, resettlement operations worldwide have far from ceased since this period, despite the fact that resettlement is found to be the most expensive durable solution for governments and UNHCR to implement. This is mostly due to the high overseas

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<sup>1</sup> Lippert, R. (1998). Rationalities and refugee resettlement, *Economy and Society*, vol 27, no 4, pp 380-406.

resettlement processing costs, and to the considerable costs of the integration services and financial assistance offered to refugees upon their arrival to the country of resettlement. Despite these costs, however, the original aim of resettlement according to UNHCR and to the major receiving countries was for resettlement to be made an option for a) the most vulnerable members of a concerned refugee population, and b) individuals or groups for whom both local repatriation and voluntary repatriation are not feasible, or not expected to be feasible within a reasonable period of time. Over time, resettlement has been used more sparingly. However, as discovered over the course of this research, it has been used more strategically, with the aim of alleviating a number of the consequences of mass refugee flows, all whilst resettling only a select few.<sup>2,3</sup>

### *Context of the post-2003 Iraqi refugee movement*

Iraqi refugee flows have been ongoing since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

According to many Iraqis, international workers in Iraq, and even UNHCR, this situation of mass exodus was not expected to dissipate for some time to come.<sup>4,5,6,7</sup>

According to UNHCR's Country Operations Profile for Iraq published in early 2010, the overall security situation in Iraq was reported to have steadily improved, despite the fact that violent events continued to erupt sporadically throughout the country.<sup>8</sup>

At the time of writing this research, however, violence in Iraq, especially in Baghdad

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR. (2010a). *UNHCR – Resettlement*, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16b1676.html>

<sup>3</sup> Pressé, D. (2009). Interview with the author on 15 July 2009. Ottawa. [Digital recording in possession of the author, Recorded into two parts, A and B]

<sup>4</sup> Reichmann, D. (2009). *Cheney: CIA Did Nothing Illegal in Interrogations*, January 2009, <http://i.abcnews.com/Politics/WireStory?id=6606473&page=2>

<sup>5</sup> Lubold, G. (2009). *Could Iraq violence affect US withdrawal plan?*, April 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0424/p02s09-usfp.html>

<sup>6</sup> Institute for War and Peace Reporting. (2009). *Baghdadis Resigned to Sporadic Violence*, 29 May 2009, ICR No. 291, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4a28c218c.html>

<sup>7</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2009). *Iraqi civilian death toll lowest since 2003*, June 2009, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4a293d81c.html>

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR. (2010b). *UNHCR – Iraq*, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486426>

and its surrounding region, seemed to be steadily increasing:

October 2009	155 are killed in a twin truck bomb attack in Baghdad. <sup>9</sup>
December 2009	More than 127 are killed in a series of car bombs in Baghdad. <sup>10</sup>
7 January 2010	Eight are killed in a series of bomb attacks on police in Hit, West of Baghdad. <sup>11</sup>
25 January 2010	More than 36 dead after three large explosions targeting Baghdad hotels housing Western businessmen and media. <sup>12</sup>
1 February 2010	More than 41 killed and 106 injured by a female suicide-bomber in Baghdad. <sup>13</sup>
5 February 2010	Two suicide bombers kill more than 40 and injure more than 140 in Karbala. <sup>14</sup>
22 February 2010	Bombings, beheadings and shootings leave 23 dead, including 9 children. <sup>15</sup>

In March 2009, UNHCR announced that 60,000 Iraqis were still in need of resettlement. However, UNHCR also reported that tens of thousands of Iraqis returned to Iraq in 2008 and in the first months of 2009 due to improved security conditions in Iraq.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, apart from these 60,000 identified individuals, many others were also in great need of the support of the international community, namely, other Iraqis perhaps outside of UNHCR's radar, the states of asylum hosting the majority of the Iraqi refugees, and the Iraqi government struggling with its reconstruction operations, its returnees, and its highly unstable security situation. Also in need of support from the international community in the rest of the world were

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<sup>9</sup> BBC News. (2009a). *BBC News – Violence returns to Iraq*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8402014.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8402014.stm)

<sup>10</sup> BBC News. (2009b). *BBC News – Violence returns to Iraq*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8402014.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8402014.stm)

<sup>11</sup> BBC News. (2010a). *BBC News – Iraq bomb attack on senior police kills eight*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8444946.stm>

<sup>12</sup> BBC News. (2010b). *BBC News – Iraq capital rocked by deadly triple bombing*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8478916.stm>

<sup>13</sup> BBC News. (2010c). *BBC News – Female suicide bomber kills dozens in Iraq*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8490819.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8490819.stm)

<sup>14</sup> BBC News. (2010d). *BBC News – Bombings hit Iraq Shia pilgrims in Karbala*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8500131.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8500131.stm)

<sup>15</sup> The New York Times, Spike in Iraq Violence as Vote Nears – NYTimes.com, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/23/world/middleeast/23iraq.html>

<sup>16</sup> UNHCR. (2009a). *Iraqi refugees leave Jordan, Syria in first resettlement to Germany*, March 2009, <http://www.unhcr.org/49c273aa2.html>



the large groups of refugees and/or IDPs in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Darfur, Chad, South Sudan, and others.

What factors led to Canada's decision, then, to start prioritizing and increasing the resettlement of Iraqis only in 2008 rather than any time before, to reduce resource allocations to the resettlement operations for other refugee groups in the rest of the world who are in need, and perhaps even more in need at the time? How and why were these priorities identified and implemented?

#### *Recent Resettlement of Iraqis to Canada*

UNHCR has been appealing to the Canadian government and other major resettlement countries to take in Iraqis since soon after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Canada resettled close to 100 Iraqis in 2006, and a total of 900 in 2007. In 2008, Iraqis represented 19.8% of those resettled to Canada, while 15.4% were resettled from Colombia, 13.1% from Afghanistan, and less than 3 % from Sudan.<sup>17</sup> As many as 2,134 were resettled in 2008,<sup>18</sup> representing more than double the number of Iraqis admitted the previous year. Canada also announced in early 2009 that it planned to double this number again in 2009, by resettling a minimum of 12,000 persons out of Syria over the next three or four years: 2,500 would be selected every year through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program (PSR), and 1,400 Iraqis would be selected by the end of 2009 through the Government-Assisted Refugee Program (GAR).

What are the reasons for these recent increases in Iraqi resettlement numbers in

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<sup>17</sup> Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR). (2009a). Email communication. Statistics prepared by CCR for its members from data provided by CIC for CCR internal use only, 19 March 2009. This figure includes both Government-Assisted and Privately Sponsored refugees.

<sup>18</sup> Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR). (2009a). Email communication. Statistics prepared by CCR for its members from data provided by CIC for CCR internal use only, 19 March 2009. This figure includes both Government-Assisted and Privately Sponsored refugees.

Canada? In addition, why was Canada perceived in having a delayed reaction to the Iraqi refugee crisis, in comparison to other resettlement countries such as the United States, Australia, Sweden, Norway, and others? The number of Iraqis resettled by Canada and other resettlement countries combined over the last few years represents only a minimal percentage of the number of Iraqi individuals UNHCR identified to be in need of resettlement. What, then, is Canada's aim in investing considerable amounts of resources, to resettle only a minimal proportion of those in need? Are the few who are resettled some of the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees (what is understood to be the original intent of resettlement according to UNHCR and the Canadian government)? How are these policies relating to the resettlement of refugees, and more particularly of Iraqis, drafted, implemented, and adapted to the continually evolving Iraqi refugee situation? The author will attempt to shed light on these questions throughout this thesis.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The author has observed a widely spread misunderstanding of the purposes of the Canadian Refugee Resettlement Program. There are some diverging perspectives on its core objectives, and a lack of knowledge of the humanitarian, political, and economic limitations that shape the system and simply do not allow it to spread in all the directions wished by all sides – political leaders, government representatives, advocates, the Canadian public, concerned international organizations (such as UNHCR), concerned countries of asylum, and refugees themselves. This observed misunderstanding and lack of knowledge, are understood to be the source of much criticism and expressed disappointments about Canada's resettlement program. Also misunderstood are the roles of all concerned parties in the policy-making process.

Through this research, the author thus aimed to gain a better understanding of the policy-making process in the case of the Iraqi refugee situation and resettlement to Canada. It is thought that this knowledge will help broaden the understanding of the author and other actors and researchers in the field of resettlement, to better understand how decisions regarding refugee resettlement are made, and what different levels of influences are involved. The author hopes that by obtaining a clearer and more transparent picture of this process through this desk research and interviewing of advocates, Canadian service provider organizations, and other partners in the refugee resettlement program, that all may gain better understanding of the Canadian government's perspective of the place and functionality of resettlement in the contemporary context.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

Resettlement, as a possible durable solution to refugee crises, was initially meant to be applied most particularly in cases where local integration in the country of asylum and voluntary repatriation were not possible at current times, or in the foreseeable future. Resettlement programs dating prior to the mid-1970s were mainly ad-hoc programs that were able to respond to such situations in a timely manner. With the further embedding of resettlement into governmental programming structures, this option became tied down with multiple bureaucratic cords, and a heavy financial burden, which made this option harder and harder to justify to citizens of major resettlement countries.

On the surface, global resettlement operations do not seem to be serving their original purposes: to provide a swift and durable solution to refugee crises (other than for the small portion of those resettled globally), to resettle those determined as most vulnerable, and those not able to permanently integrate into the country of asylum or return to their country of origin. Instead, resettlement seems to be used sparingly, rather than according to the actual resettlement needs of refugees, as assessed by UNHCR. What, then, is the value in using resettlement at all, for the small proportion of the world's refugees who will be able to benefit from it?

With regard to the resettlement of Iraqis, although the refugee crisis in and around Iraq was ongoing from the time of the onset of the war in 2003, it was only in 2006-2007 that the Canadian government began considering mass resettlement operations for the Iraqi population. This recent increase and focus on Iraqi refugees also came during a period where other populations in the world (e.g. from Afghanistan, Pakistan,

Sudan, Chad, Sri Lanka and others) would arguably have greater needs for resettlement than the Iraqi population. What factors, then, explain the timing and the breadth of Canada's altered position on the resettlement of Iraqis?

## **CHAPTER 1: HISTORY OF RESETTLEMENT AND THE IRAQI REFUGEE CRISIS IN RELATION TO CANADA**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### *UNHCR and Resettlement*

Resettlement is one of three main durable solutions to refugee situations established by UNHCR, along with local integration in the refugee's country of first asylum, and voluntary repatriation. It was first determined by the International Refugee Organization (IRO) to be the preferred durable solution to the plight of the estimated 1 million European refugees who fled their homes during the Second World War. The next large-scale resettlement operations took place for the approximately 2 million Vietnamese boat people resettled between the late seventies and eighties. However, this refugee movement was thought to be associated to very high costs, and particularly in terms of the costs of resettlement operations and integration programs for this group.<sup>19</sup> In addition, during and after these larger waves of resettlement, some feared that such mass resettlement operations were possibly creating a 'pull-factor', and somehow encouraging individuals to flee their countries of origins only in the hope of being resettled.<sup>20</sup> Durable solutions to refugee crises thus began to be re-thought, and re-shaped by UNHCR, major receiving states, and other international actors. In the 1990s, further emphasis was placed on voluntary repatriation, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Sadako Ogata, even designating the nineties as the decade of voluntary repatriation. Local integration was then also favored over resettlement whenever possible.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Loescher, G. (2008). *The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): the politics and practice of refugee protection into the twenty-first century*, Routledge, p.48.

<sup>20</sup> Casasola, M. (2001). Current Trends and New Challenges for Canada's Resettlement Program, *Refuge*, 19 (4), p. 77.

<sup>21</sup> Loescher, G. *Ibid.*

### *Canada's history of resettlement and related legislation*

One of CIC's official missions is to work towards building a stronger Canada, by notably maintaining Canada's humanitarian tradition through protecting refugees and others in refugee-like situations. It is thus CIC's aim to have an approach to immigration that supports global humanitarian efforts to assist those in need of protection.<sup>22</sup> This aim drives Canada's refugee resettlement program and reflects the commitment made by Canada when ratifying the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. The Canadian government and its citizens take much pride in being considered by the world as a leading humanitarian country. Canada is the second resettlement and asylum country after the United States. It is considered one of the leaders in the resettlement of both refugees and other individuals in need of protection. With its resettlement program, Canada aims to bring the concerned individuals in the country, *inter alia*, to contribute in making Canada a richer and more prosperous society.<sup>23</sup> The latter aim is implemented through the Canadian resettlement policy related to the refugees' potential to successfully establish themselves in Canada, although this resettlement criterion is applied more or less heavily, depending on the level of protection needs of the applicant.<sup>24</sup>

Canada's resettlement program came into existence some time after the end of World War II. Since this period, the country has resettled over 700,000 Convention Refugees and persons in refugee-like situations.<sup>25</sup> In 1969, Canada ratified both the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter

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<sup>22</sup> CIC. (2009b). *Who we are*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/departement/mission.asp>

<sup>23</sup> CIC. (2008b). *What Canada is doing to help refugees*, July 2008  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/help.asp>

<sup>24</sup> UNHCR. (2007a). *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook and Country Chapters – Canada*,  
<http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3c5e55594.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

named 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol).<sup>26</sup> These international instruments are today incorporated into Canadian law through section 96 of the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA):

96. A Convention refugee is a person who, by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion,

(a) is outside each of their countries of nationality and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of each of those countries; or

(b) not having a country of nationality, is outside the country of their former habitual residence and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to return to that country.<sup>27</sup>

The 2002 IRPA was also shaped by criticisms of Canada's resettlement activities received in the 1980s and 90s, concerning the slow speed and lengthiness of Canada's resettlement processing, and thus its inability to meet the needs of refugees with urgent protection needs. However, in its attempt to respond to these concerns, Canada aimed to increase the settlement potential of the populations selected for resettlement. In doing so, however, Canada also limited the access to resettlement to individuals who would potentially present excessive demand on the Canadian public health system, or to those who may be unable to demonstrate a potential ability to quickly and successfully establish themselves.<sup>28</sup>

In response to these limitations and operational issues, the Refugee Resettlement Model (RRM) was developed in 1997, and proposed the following measures:

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<sup>26</sup> UN. (2010). *United Nations Treaty Collections*, [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetailsII.aspx?&src=TREATY&mtsg\\_no=V~2&chapter=5&Temp=mtsg2&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetailsII.aspx?&src=TREATY&mtsg_no=V~2&chapter=5&Temp=mtsg2&lang=en)

<sup>27</sup> Department of Justice Canada. (2001). *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Section 96*, <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/I-2.5/page-4.html>

<sup>28</sup> Casasola, M. (2001). *Ibid.* p.78-79.



- To prioritize refugees' protection rather than their potential ability to successfully establish themselves once in Canada
- To prioritize family reunification
- To ensure the immediate resettlement of urgent protection cases.<sup>29</sup>

These measures and others were incorporated into bill C-31, which was later incorporated into the 2002 IRPA. The 2002 IRPA also notably removed the 'excessive medical demand' criterion for refugee applicants.<sup>30</sup>

#### *Canadian resettlement statistical figures*

Resettled refugees account for approximately 4 to 6% of all immigrants to Canada. If added to the proportion of individuals who represent successful asylum claimants, the total percentage of protected persons selected by Canada in proportion to all migrants to Canada is between 10 and 13%.<sup>31</sup> Canada, along with the United States and Australia, oversees one of the three largest existing refugee resettlement programs. As a point of comparison, in 2008, the United States resettled 60,108 refugees and admitted 22,930 asylum claimants (totaling to 83,038 individuals),<sup>32</sup> Canada admitted a total of 21,860,<sup>33</sup> and Australia, a total of 14,000.<sup>34</sup> This represented a proportion of 1 for every 3,667 individuals in the United States,<sup>35</sup> 1 for every 1,539 individuals in

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.79.

<sup>31</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:10-0:11m.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2009). *Annual Flow Report, Refugees and Asylees: 2008*, [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois\\_rfa\\_fr\\_2008.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_rfa_fr_2008.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> CIC. (2010ba). Facts and Figures 2008: Immigration Overview: Permanent and temporary residents, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2008/permanent/02.asp>

<sup>34</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:33m.

<sup>35</sup> The population of United States in 2008 was of 304,059,724. Obtained from U.S. Census Bureau. (2009). *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008 (NST-EST2008-01)*, <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/NST-ann-est2008.html>

Australia,<sup>36</sup> and 1 for every 1,524 individuals in Canada.<sup>37</sup> A total of sixteen countries have a yearly quota of refugees they admit to their territories, while other countries only run ad-hoc programs set up according to the needs of a given refugee population at a given time.<sup>38</sup>

#### *Canada's three resettlement programs*

Canada has three main resettlement programs: the Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) Program,<sup>39</sup> the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program,<sup>40</sup> and the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program.<sup>41</sup> Those resettled under the GAR program are referred to Canada by UNHCR, and are supported financially by the Canadian government, and assisted by the staff of Canadian Service Provider Organizations (SPOs). On the other hand, Canadian individuals or organizations wishing to sponsor a refugee for resettlement to Canada must submit a PSR application for this individual or family to CIC. Canadian visa offices can also suggest a case to be resettled by a Private Sponsor (Visa Office Referral – VOR).<sup>42</sup> Once the private sponsorship application is approved by CIC, or that a VOR is matched to a Canadian sponsor, a Sponsorship Agreement is signed, and the file is sent to the visa office abroad for adjudication. Private Sponsors are entirely responsible for the cost of the application process, and for the financial assistance

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<sup>36</sup> The population of Australia in 2008 was of 21,542,500. Obtained from Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2008). *3101.0 – Australian Demographic Statistics, Sep 2008*, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3101.0Main+Features1Sep+2008>

<sup>37</sup> The population of Canada in 2008 was of 33,311,400. Obtained from Statistics Canada. (2008). *The Daily, Monday, September 29, 2008. Canada's population estimates*, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/080929/dq080929b-eng.htm>

<sup>38</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:04-0:08m.

<sup>39</sup> CIC. (2005a). *Government-Assisted Refugee Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-gov.asp>

<sup>40</sup> CIC. (2010a). *Sponsoring refugees: Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/private.asp>

<sup>41</sup> CIC. (2007a). *Sponsoring refugees: Joint Assistance Sponsorship*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>

<sup>42</sup> CIC. (2005b). *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/ref-sponsor.pdf>

provided to the refugees for up to one year. Sponsors are also responsible for assisting refugees in their settlement process, also for up to one year. Lastly, the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program represents a combination of the GAR and PSR programs. Cases are referred or selected in the same manner as the PSR program, although individuals will receive financial assistance from the Canadian government for up to three years, and the sponsors will assist the refugees through their process of resettlement during the same period.

The existence of these different protection programs thus allows for a greater number of individuals to be resettled to Canada through different channels. Through these programs, Canada is able to offer resettlement to the most vulnerable (through the GAR program), to promote family or community reunification (through the PSR program), and also to allow access to those who may have otherwise fallen under other programs' radars (through the PSR and JAS programs).

### *History of Iraqis in Canada*

While between 1945 and 1975, less than 200 Iraqis immigrated to Canada, between 1975 and 1992, 6,472 Iraqis immigrated to the country. According to the Canadian Census, by 2006, approximately 29,950 individuals of Iraqi origin lived in Canada.<sup>43</sup>

This is a significant increase when compared to the 1991 Census, which recorded only 4,790 Iraqis in Canada. However, reports from community sources state that the Iraqi

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<sup>43</sup> Statistics Canada. (2006). *'Ethnic Origin (247), Single and Multiple Ethnic Origin Responses (3) and Sex (3) for the Population of Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2006 Census - 20% Sample Data'*  
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/topics/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?TPL=RETR&ALEVEL=3&APATH=3&CATNO=&DETAIL=0&DIM=&DS=99&FL=0&FREE=0&GAL=0&GC=99&GK=NA&GRP=1&IPS=&METH=0&ORDER=1&PID=92333&PTYPE=88971&RL=0&S=1&ShowAll=No&StartRow=1&SUB=801&Temporal=2006&Theme=80&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=>

population in Canada in 1991 was already over 25,000.<sup>44</sup> This discrepancy may be due to the fact that many Iraqis, fearing retaliation from individuals still associated to the Iraqi regime, concealed their true identity or Iraqi origin. Also, between the time of publication of the 1991 census and the time that data from these community sources was being collected,<sup>45</sup> a considerable wave of Iraqis, mainly Shiites, arrived in Canada during and after the Gulf War, due to the instability and continuing oppressive climate in the country. Lastly, the discrepancy could also be attributed to the fact that many Iraqis identified themselves to other groups, such as Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Kurds, rather than only Iraqi.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Gulf Wars and the increase of Iraqi resettlement to Canada*

On August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, after which the UN Security Council called for an immediate withdrawal, and voted for Resolution 661, which imposed a range of economic sanctions on Iraq. In January 1991, the first Gulf War began with a U.S.-led offensive against Iraq. After four days of more intense ground operations in February 1991, Kuwait was liberated, and Iraq later accepted the terms of a ceasefire.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, in Canada, resettlement operations for Iraqis began soon after the beginning of the first Gulf War.

More than a decade after the First Gulf War ceasefire, in January 2002, President George W. Bush listed Iraq as one of the 'axes of evil' in his weekly address to the American public. In September of the same year, British Prime Minister Tony Blair introduced documents allegedly proving that Iraq held within its borders weapons of

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<sup>44</sup> Shuraydi, M. A. (1998) 'Iraqis' in *The Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/i/7/1>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> UNHCR. (2009b). *Iraq chronology*, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/iraq?page=history>

mass destruction. UN weapons inspectors entered Iraq the following November, and returned with no confirmation of such allegations. Despite this, the U.S. and its allies launched another offensive in March 2003, and Saddam Hussein was later captured in December of the same year.<sup>48</sup>

Between 1991 and 2005, Canada resettled a total of 15,975 Iraqis:

**Table 1: Iraqis resettled to Canada since 1991\***

Year	Iraqis Resettled	Year	Iraqis Resettled
1991	270	2001	1,130
1992	1,170	2002	920
1993	2,230	2003	530
1994	1,340	2004	720
1995	1,160	2005	520
1996	2,240	2006	90**
1997	1,115	2007	900
1998	780	2008	2,134
1999	690	2009	3,900***
2000	1,160		

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\*Data for 1991 obtained from UNHCR. (2003a). *Iraqi Refugees Around the World*, <http://www.unhcr.org/3e79b00b9.pdf>. Data for 1992 to 2006 obtained from UNHCR. (2007b). *Statistics on Displaced Iraqis Around The World*, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-in/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=461f7cb92>. Data for 2007 to 2009 obtained from Pressé, D. (2009). *Ibid*.

\*\*2006 figure represents only the number of referrals submitted to Canada by UNHCR.

\*\*\*2009 figure represents Canada's projected number of Iraqis who were expected to be resettled in 2009. The total number of Iraqis resettled in 2009 was not yet made public at the time of writing.

As can be noticed in Table 1, the resettlement of Iraqis to Canada seemed to have began approximately two years after the onset of the First Gulf War, and increased again in 2000 following the Second Gulf War. Interestingly, however, it is only four years after the onset of the 2003 war in Iraq – which resulted in more massive population movements than the First and Second Gulf Wars combined<sup>49</sup> – that resettlement numbers began to increase again.

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> UNHCR. (2003b). *Iraqi Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Statistics*, March 2003, *Iraqi Refugees Around the World*, <http://www.unhcr.org/3e79b00b9.pdf>

Iraqis have since been fleeing their country in both steady flows and large waves, first after the initial U.S.-led invasion of 2003, and also after the bombing of the Shia Muslim Al Askari Mosque in Samarra in February 2006, which spurred increased sectarian violence and population displacement.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, although Canada had resettled on average 1,170 Iraqis per year between 1992 and 2002, despite this increased violence, instability, and population displacement in Iraq, only 530, 720, and 520 Iraqis were resettled by Canada in 2003, 2004, 2005, respectively.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, only 90 Iraqi refugees had been referred by UNHCR and resettled by Canada by the end of 2006.<sup>52</sup> Numbers of resettled Iraqis in Canada increased in 2007 with a total of 900 Iraqis being admitted to the country,<sup>53</sup> and 2,134 more were admitted in 2008.<sup>54</sup> Finally, Canada expected to resettle a total of 3900 Iraqis over the course of 2009.<sup>55</sup>

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Refugee policies in Canada were first based on the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees that were both signed by Canada in 1969.<sup>56</sup> However, it was only in 1978 that refugee determination decisions became formal and non-discretionary, with the implementation of the Canadian Immigration Act. In 1985, the Supreme Court of Canada's declared in the case of *Singh et al. v. Canada (Minister of Employment and Immigration)* that a large part of the

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<sup>50</sup> UNHCR. (2009b).

<sup>51</sup> UNHCR. (2007b). *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Pressé, D. (2009). *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> CCR. (2009a). *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> CIC. (2009a). *Resettlement – One Durable Solution in the Global Refugee Protection Regime*, Presentation for the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University, June 2009, p.12.

<sup>56</sup> Dolin, B. R. & M. Young. (2002). *Canada's Refugee Protection System (BP-185E)*  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp185-e.htm#immigration2tx>

refugee protection system at the time was at odds with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.<sup>57</sup> It was following this ruling that the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) was established. Created by the Parliament of Canada, the IRB is an independent tribunal notably mandated to adjudicate all asylum claims registered in Canada, as well as to receive appeals relating to immigration decisions, and orders for removal.<sup>58</sup> The IRB system underwent legislation changes in 1992 and 1995, and was also later modified by the implementation of the 2002 IRPA. Above and beyond the IRPA and 1951 Convention, also shaping Canada's humanitarian obligations are the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as will later be highlighted by those interviewed in the context of this study.

IHein<sup>59</sup> identified national financial concerns as one of the influencing factors in shaping a state's refugee resettlement system. However, he also added that a country's foreign policy, as well as national public pressure may sway politicians on one side or another and thus contribute in determining the country's level of commitment to refugee populations in need of resettlement.

Lippert<sup>60</sup> looked into the changes in the Canadian refugee resettlement program from the 1970s to the end of the 1990s. He found that the Canadian program shifted from being based on principles of 'liberal welfare' from the 1970s to early 80s, to those he describes as 'advanced liberal' from the early 80s and into the 90s. The initial goal of

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<sup>57</sup> Dolin, B. R. & M. Young. (2002). *Canada's Refugee Protection System (BP-185E)*

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp185-e.htm#immigration2tx>

<sup>58</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB). (2010). *About the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada*, <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/brdcom/abau/Pages/Index.aspx>

<sup>59</sup> Hein, J. (1993). 'Refuges, Immigrants, and the State', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol 19, pp 43-59.

<sup>60</sup> Lippert, R. *Ibid.*

the Canadian refugee protection program when it took a more formal structure in the 1970s, according to Lippert, was to provide protection to individuals who were at risk of being exposed to immediate physical danger or death through selection and refugee status determination, and from moral and mental dangers through resettlement.<sup>61</sup>

Since the experience of the large-scale and high-cost resettlement program for the Vietnamese boat people, which largely took place between the late 70s and early 80s, Lippert reported that the Canadian government later became merely involved in financing resettlement activities, rather than providing first-line services through its governmental agencies, thus making the best use possible of low-cost or free services offered by contracted Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) and their volunteers.

Lippert highlighted that Canada's refugee program thus initially stemmed from social sciences and humanitarian principles, and then moved towards a system that prioritized accounting and cost-benefit analyses. This perspective regarding the move away from humanitarian principles was also supported by Chimni,<sup>62</sup> who argued that "humanitarian factors *do not* shape the refugee policies of the dominant states in the international system." [emphasis added by the author] He claimed that there is a "need to be alert to the non-humanitarian objectives which are pursued by these actors from time to time behind the facade of humanitarianism."<sup>63</sup> According to Basok, in line with both Lippert's and Chimni's perspectives, refugees were simply not viewed as positively serving Canada's economic interests, despite the fact that at the time of Basok's writing in 1996, refugees admitted to Canada (mainly of European origin),

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.381.

<sup>62</sup> Chimni, B.S. (2004) From Resettlement to Involuntary Repatriation: Towards a Critical History of Durable Solutions to Refugee Problems, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 23 (3), pp 55-73.

<sup>63</sup> Lippert, R. *Ibid.* p.58.



did not differ considerably from those admitted under the economic migrant class in terms of their socio-economic and demographic characteristics.<sup>64</sup>

Lippert also argued that this movement towards principles of ‘advanced welfare’ also represented a move towards a more local type of management of the program, rather than a centralized management associated with a liberal welfare system. He based his interpretation of this shift in Canadian resettlement policy on his observation of an increased trend of the Canadian government towards delegating settlement services to SPOs and individual citizens, thus decentralizing the management of the resettlement program to the provincial governments, and hence ‘de-responsibilizing’ the government from the delivery of the program’s services. He also pointed to policies put into place during the same period, which increased the level of responsibility put on the refugees for assuming their own resettlement, by having them pay a 975\$ landing fee required from all immigrants to Canada, in addition to the fee of 500\$ for the administrative processing of their landed immigrant status application. The Right of Landing fee paid by incoming refugees was thus expected to account for over half of the costs of the resettlement program incurred by the federal government,<sup>65</sup> evidently taking away from the principle of providing humanitarian assistance to some of the world’s most vulnerable people.

With regards to this observed decentralization of services and responsibilities, however, Basok disagreed. She observed that despite appeared movement towards a decentralization of responsibilities, civil and humanitarian groups defending the interests of refugees had had no more than a minor impact on Canada’s refugee policy

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<sup>64</sup> Basok, T. (1996). Refugee Policy, Globalization Radical Challenge, or State Control? *Studies in Political Economy*, 50, Summer 1996, p.145.

<sup>65</sup> Lippert, R. p.387.

in the last 25 years. She argued that although the Canadian government may seemed to have been decentralizing its services and decision powers in relation to refugee resettlement, it was in fact retaining complete control over those who will be allowed into Canada. She also argued that Canada had implemented more restrictive policies in response to financial crises, increased xenophobia, and the idea held by some members of the Canadian public that refugees significantly increase the strain on the Canadian welfare system.<sup>66</sup> She added: “[...] the state does not sacrifice its essential interests, and organizes this support in order to attain national goals which serve the fundamental long-run interests of the dominant group.”<sup>67</sup> She also found that although the government “will encourage some independent initiatives in the refugee field, [it] will consistently interfere with both private sponsorships and [the functioning of] the IRB.”<sup>68</sup>

Lippert had also highlighted the importance of the 1986 announcement that lead to the creation of the IRB, in the hopes of having a Refugee Status Determination System that would be removed from the influence of politics, and thus more independent and impartial.<sup>69</sup> However, despite these efforts, the IRB continued to be criticized for being partial, and composed of political allies of the government in power at a given time. The IRB has thus moved, over the last few years, from favoring political nomination for its commissioners, to implementing a more thorough recruitment system aimed at finding non-partisan, knowledgeable, experienced, and highly qualified individuals who can demonstrate the ability to render decisions impartial to the political agendas of any particular party or government. For the purpose of this

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<sup>66</sup> Basok, T. *Ibid.* p.133.

<sup>67</sup> Basok, T. *Ibid.* p.135.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p.136-137

<sup>69</sup> Lippert, R. *Ibid.*, p.385.

research topic, although the asylum system is administratively separate from the refugee resettlement system, the author argues that the context of the system of asylum still indicates a tendency of the Canadian government towards, on the one hand, attempting to de-politicize and/or privatize the Canadian refugee protection system, and to distance itself from the ownership and liability of the program, and on the other, keeping some level of control over the selection process of IRB commissioners.

Before Lippert, however, Stein<sup>70</sup> had highlighted in the early eighties that the context in which the resettlement of approximately 1 million European refugees occurred between 1947 and 1951, and which was overseen by the IRO at the time, was very revealing. Stein notes that these refugees were accepted by the major resettlement countries only after some difficult debates within these countries regarding their domestic immigration policies,<sup>71</sup> which were to be expected considering the unprecedented magnitude of these resettlement operations. Even more, the IRO had only been established by the United Nations as a temporary solution to the specific refugee crisis Europe was faced with at the time.<sup>72</sup> Thereafter, and until about 1975, most countries managed the resettlement of refugees through ad hoc programs. However, it is with the resettlement operations that affected over 1 million Indochinese between 1975 and beyond Stein's time of writing in 1983, that major

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<sup>70</sup> Stein, B. N. (1983). The Commitment to Refugee Resettlement, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 467, The Global Refugee Problem: U.S. and World Response, May 2008, pp 187-201.

<sup>71</sup> Stein does not elaborate regarding the nature of these debates that occurred on a national level when states were deciding whether or not to resettle the Vietnamese boat people. Further research would be needed on this statement.

<sup>72</sup> Stein, B. N. *Ibid.*, p.192.

resettlement countries at the time, such as the U.S., Australia, and Canada, began to see the need for more permanent resettlement programs and policies.<sup>73</sup>

Global resettlement figures peaked in 1979 and 1980, Stein points out, but were found to have drastically dropped over the subsequent years. He notes that in contrast to the high number of resettled refugees in the mid-seventies and the early eighties, and to the great ethnic diversity of these resettled groups, there was a perceptible decrease in the commitment of traditional receiving countries towards resettlement towards the tail end of this period. Following this active period of resettlement, he identified some of the possible factors that could explain this decrease in commitment, such as: the general public's questioning of who is truly a refugee and who is truly deserving of resettlement, poorer economic conditions in receiving countries including higher unemployment, an overwhelming number of individuals who would potentially need to be resettled, and the integration challenges experienced by some refugee populations. Other factors that could explain a decrease in resettlement numbers, but that did not necessarily imply a decrease in commitment, according to Stein, included: the reduced numbers of refugees in the camps of first asylum in South East Asia; a shift on the part of UNHCR and of other international organizations away from resettlement, and towards voluntary repatriation or local integration; and an increased willingness of countries of first asylum to allow for long-term hosting of refugee populations.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.193.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p.188-189.

Beiser<sup>75</sup> argued that due to its intake of approximately 300,000 immigrants per year, representing about 1% of its existing population, Canada has made immigration one of its most debated issues, and greatest challenge. While refugees only represent a small proportion of this quota (between 5 and 10%), Beiser observed that Canada prides itself on treating refugees fairly and compassionately. He also argues, however, that the limited amount of resources allocated to arrival and integration services do not demonstrate such a commitment. Rather, the limited allocations of funding are more of an indication that Canada may be admitting a certain number of refugees in order to save its humanitarian reputation, a more instrumental objective, rather than representing a trend towards the reproduction of truly humanitarian values and continued humanitarian action. This argument by Beiser is also supported by Neuwirth,<sup>76</sup> who argued that refugee resettlement policies are moving towards being completely shaped by foreign policies, and being informed by ‘calculated kindness’, rather than intentions based on humanitarian principles. This perspective was also supported by Loescher, who referred to “narrow self-interest calculations of sovereign nation-states,”<sup>77</sup> and that refugees at times are used as political pawns in the government’s pursuit of its foreign policy agenda, and in the aim of “embarrassing or destabilizing enemy governments.”<sup>78</sup>

Also according to Basok, the Canadian government had a considerable influence on the ‘anti-refugee hysteria’ in Canada, feeding on the misconceptualization of refugees, as simple economic migrants individuals aiming to take advantage of the Canadian

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<sup>75</sup> Beiser, M. (2006). Longitudinal Research to Promote Effective Refugee Resettlement, *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 43 (1), pp.56-71.

<sup>76</sup> Neuwirth, G. (1988). Refugee Resettlement, *Current Sociology*, 36, pp.27-41.

<sup>77</sup> Loescher, G. *Introduction. Refugee Issues in International Relations* in G. Loescher and L. Monahan (eds.). (1989). *Refugees and International Relations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* p.11-12.

systems.<sup>79</sup> This misconceptualization led to the inclusion of particular elements in the C-31 bill, which was found to favor the resettlement of refugees, its provisions at the same time limited individuals' access to the inland refugee determination system.<sup>80</sup>

*Parallel shifts in the application of durable solutions and in the profile of refugees resettled to Canada*

Stein pointed out that a durable solution was initially meant to help “the refugees to become self-sufficient, enabling them to integrate and participate fully in the social and economic life of their new country, or their homeland if they repatriate.”<sup>81</sup>

However, he argued that resettlement was quickly moved to being considered as an exceptional solution that should only be applied when the two other main solutions are simply not possible, even for an undetermined, but likely long period of time. Stein denotes a ‘tug’ in the context of refugee resettlement programs between a state’s willingness and moral obligations to intervene in refugee-producing emergencies, and its wish to establish a controlled and regularized system to manage resettlement programs. He argues that while states attempt to establish programs that would allow for a regular flow of refugee resettlement, there is of course no such thing as regular and predictable production of refugee flows.<sup>82</sup>

Regarding this context and shift from prioritizing resettlement to designating voluntary repatriation and local integration as the preferred solutions to refugee crises, Chimni presumed that “since refugees from the South were now making their way to the North, and since there was at present no shortage of labour, it was time [for the resettlement community] to rethink the solution of resettlement in other than the

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<sup>79</sup> Basok, T. p.149.

<sup>80</sup> Cassasola, M. (2001). *Ibid.*, p.79.

<sup>81</sup> Stein, B.N. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p.196.

limited Cold War context.”<sup>83</sup> Chimni thus assumed that the resettlement community, here including the major countries of resettlement and UNHCR, was suddenly no longer ready to consider mass resettlement operations an option for refugees of non-European origins. Moreover, Chimni emphasized that although UNHCR claimed there was not enough scholarly work that had looked into voluntary repatriation as a durable solution to refugee problems, the UNHCR Executive Committee proceeded to adopt in 1985, without further scholarly studies on the topic, a key conclusion on voluntary repatriation which urged the international community to consider this strategy as a preferred durable solution to refugee problems.<sup>84,85</sup> Advocates of voluntary repatriation thus made the assumption that all refugees wished to return home, without ever verifying if such an assumption was accurate for some, most or all of the refugees of the world.<sup>86</sup>

From the early 1990s to the early years of 2000, Casasola also noted a shift in the profile of the refugees resettled by Canada. The resettlement of individuals with special needs – such as women at risk, elderly refugees, and some with medical needs – increased from 89 individuals in 1996, to over 550 individuals in 2000. In addition, while there was no legislation to this effect, Canadian visa officers were reported to have decreased the application of the ‘ability to establish’ criterion. In addition, the region of origin of the resettled refugees also shifted from Europe in the 1990s, to Africa and the Middle East at the beginning of 2000.<sup>87</sup> Basok added that those resettled in the 1990s were also no longer originating from states determined by

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<sup>83</sup> Chimni, B.S. *Ibid.*, p.58.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.55-73.

<sup>85</sup> UNHCR (1985) *Voluntary Repatriation*, 18 October 1985, No. 40 (XXXVI), <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae68c9518.html>

<sup>86</sup> Chimni, B.S. *Ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>87</sup> Casasola, M. (2001). *Ibid.* p.80.

Canada as representing ideological enemies; refugees could no longer be used as political pawns, and would be seen as merely burdens to state.<sup>88</sup>

*Medical and security checks – causing limited access and delay*

Casasola also identified security and medical screening procedures as considerably limiting those admissible for resettlement to Canada. While UNHCR will already execute one level of security screening by applying the exclusions outlined in the 1951 Convention, Canada will still refuse some UNHCR-referred cases based on security grounds – cases that are at times subsequently accepted by the United States or the Netherlands. This is in addition to the fact that Canada was also found to be slow in conducting its security reviews, which created additional delays in the resettlement operations. Casasola also warned that Canada's medical restrictions should make sure to only limit access to those who could legitimately cause a threat to the health of the Canadian public,<sup>89</sup> and that medical requirements should be consistent across all resettlement countries, to reduce on the costs of the countries' respective medical screening processes, and on the time spent by UNHCR to meet each and every one's medical and security requirements.<sup>90</sup>

*Resettlement models*

Lanphier,<sup>91</sup> on the other hand, compared four different types of refugee resettlement models: 1) a high volume of resettlement with a focus on economic integration, 2) a smaller volume of resettlement with a focus on economic integration, 3) a smaller volume of resettlement with a focus on cultural adaptation, and 4) a high volume of

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<sup>88</sup> Basok, T. p.147.

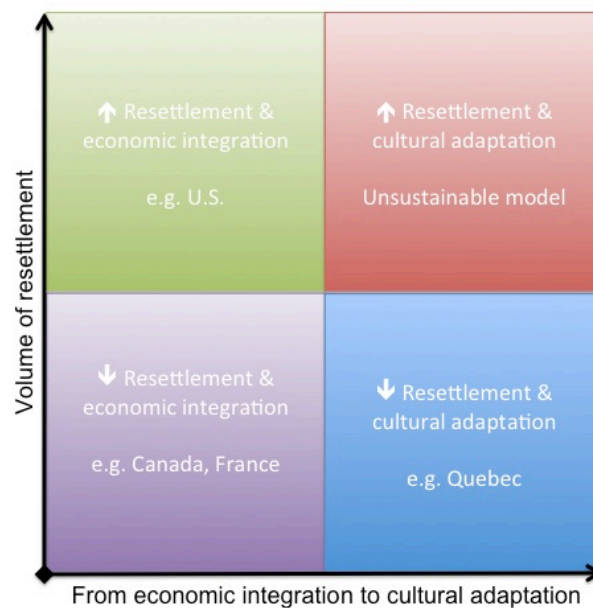
<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* p.81.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* p.82

<sup>91</sup> Lanphier, C. M. (1983) Refugee Models in Action, *International Migration Review*, vol 17, no 1, pp 4-33.



resettlement with a focus on cultural adaptation. Below is a graphic summarizing Lanphier's Four types of resettlement models:



**Figure 1: Lanphier's Four Resettlement Models**

The first model, according to Lanphier, represents more closely the American model of resettlement, whereby a large number of individuals are resettled, and are expected to integrate the host country's economy as soon as possible. The second model, according to Lanphier, represents the Canadian or French model of resettlement. It should be noted that the resettlement numbers of France today are in no way comparable to those of Canada, amounting only to a few hundred per year, compared to over 10,000 for Canada. However, Lanphier argues that their integration aims are comparable, i.e. with a focus on the resettled refugees' quick integration to the economy, rather than a focus on assisting them with their cultural adaptation. The third model, Lanphier argues, is most representative of the resettlement and integration objectives of Quebec, a French-speaking province in Canada, which for its immigrants and refugees will greatly emphasize instruction on the province's history and culture, as well as the Quebec's society common values. Although an ideal humanitarian refugee resettlement system would be imagined to yield high

resettlement numbers, and focus on both the economic and cultural adaptation of the refugee, as described by model 4, Lanthier found that such a model was simply not sustainable. Rather, he found that a smaller volume of resettlement would better allow for a focus on either economic adaptation (such as is the case for the Canadian and French resettlement programs) *or* on cultural adaptation (such as is the case with Quebec's resettlement program). With these models, Lanthier argues that refugee resettlement programs become instrumental in shaping a state's broader social policies.<sup>92</sup>

Canada's focus on economic integration and its lower intake of refugees for resettlement described by Lanthier in 2003 thus goes in line Lippert's observation in 1998 of the Canadian resettlement program having moved towards being more of an advanced welfare system, focusing on lower, but manageable numbers, and prioritizing swift economic integration of the incoming refugees, through personalized services offered by a range of organizations outside of the governmental system.

However, would such a description accurately describe the Canadian resettlement today, focusing more on the economic integration, rather than the cultural integration of its resettled refugees? The author would argue more emphasis would be placed today on the cultural integration of refugees, and of all other types of migrants, in a similar way than what had been done in the province of Quebec. Quebec's system being more focused on the cultural integration its of new migrants, in practice, has, over time, focused more than other regions of the country on the refugees' language skills (French language skills in the case of Quebec), as well as increasing new migrants' knowledge of Quebec politics, history, and culture. With the entry into

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p.22.

power of the Conservative government at the federal level in 2006, similar objectives have been voiced by CIC Minister, Jason Kenney, concerning new migrants' civic responsibility to learn one of the two official languages, and to expand the level of knowledge on Canadian history and politics that would be necessary to succeed in their Canadian citizenship examination.<sup>93</sup> Economic integration, then, has come to be seen as insufficient. Migrants of all categories, including refugees, are now expected by the Canadian Government to fully blend into their new society.

Could this also mean a shift from an integrationist, to an assimilationist immigration system in Canada? These few past decades of the government's *laissez-faire* approach, which devoted limited funding to SPOs and put pressure on these organizations to encourage migrants to become independent from public assistance and enter the labor market and as quickly as possible, may now bring the government to realize that swift economic integration may not be sufficient. It is insufficient, according to the Canadian government, if migrants are found to not have learned a sufficient level English or French that would allow them to work at an equivalent level on the job market than what they experienced in their countries of origin – work deemed equivalent to their level of education and previous work experience. It could also be considered insufficient if the refugee is not able to attain a certain level on the job market in order to perhaps bring to the economy at least the equivalent in the public funds invested in his or her resettlement to Canada.

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<sup>93</sup> Whyte, K. (2009) *Maclean's Interview: Jason Kenney*, April 2009, <http://www2.macleans.ca/2009/04/29/macleans-interview-jason-kenney/>

Finally, regarding resettlement numbers, Cochetel<sup>94</sup> reported that Canada determined its resettlement capacity to be of 6,140 GARs for 2008 (representing 0.018% of its population<sup>95</sup>). This was in comparison to the U.S.'s determined capacity of 50,000 (representing 0.016% of its population<sup>96</sup>), and Australia's capacity of 6,000 (representing 0.028% of its population<sup>97</sup>). The global resettlement capacity of all receiving countries combined thus amounted to 69,610 refugees in 2008. Cochetel stated that although the number of resettlement countries and their allocated resettlement spaces were increasing, it still did not match the current resettlement needs of the world's refugee population, as per UNHCR's assessment of global resettlement needs. He also warned that the gap between resettlement needs and states' declared capacities was likely to increase. As mentioned above, the resettlement needs of Iraqis alone were assessed by UNHCR to be of approximately 60,000 in early 2009.

Thus, in light of these authors' observations and findings, the author aimed to document more current views and perspectives – from the Canadian government itself, and related non-governmental partners and individuals – on the Canadian resettlement system as it is today. As resettlement was seen as more of a key durable solution before the 1990s, much more writing could be found on this topic before this date, while considerably less in the 1990s and thereafter when voluntary repatriation

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<sup>94</sup> Cochetel, V. (2008). *Durable Solutions in Practice: Worldwide Context Resettlement*. Representing UNHCR, presentation for the "Resettlement as a Durable Solutions" conference, Romania, May 2008, <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/4856364f4.pdf>

<sup>95</sup> Population of Canada estimated to reach 33,487,208 in July 2009. Data obtained from Central Intelligence Agency. (2009). *The World Factbook -- Country Comparison : : Population*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html?countryName=United%20States&countryCode=US&regionCode=na#US>

<sup>96</sup> Population of the United States estimated to reach 307,212,123 by July 2008. Data obtained from *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Population of Australia estimated to reach 21,262,641 by July 2009. Data obtained from *Ibid.*

and local integration became the preferred solutions to refugee crises. Resettlement operations, however, are still associated with considerable costs invested by receiving states, in comparison to the funds allocated to the implementation of the two other main durable solutions.

A number of questions, however, are not addressed by previously cited authors. Beyond the determination of a yearly resettlement ceiling, the interest of this thesis was to reveal more in-depth details about how Canadian resettlement policies are initiated, developed, and implemented. The meeting evidence of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration relating to Iraqi refugees available on the Parliament of Canada website showcases how different groups come to advocate and defend their perspective relating to the cause of Iraqi refugees.<sup>98</sup> However, what is not related in these public materials is how the Committee will come to a particular conclusion on, in this case, the Iraqi Refugee situation, how this conclusion is conveyed to the CIC Minister and others, and how the views of the committee affect the policy-making process relating to Iraqi refugees. The questions asked to those interviewed were: what is influencing the Canadian government to resettle the number of refugees, and more particularly the number of Iraqis, it chooses to resettle every year? Is the government most influenced by UNHCR's assessment of the Iraqis' needs for resettlement? How is the level of funding for resettlement determined every year, and what proportion of these resources will be allocated to the resettlement of Iraqi refugees? How are policies shaped with reference to all refugees resettled to Canada? What about Iraqi refugees in particular?

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<sup>98</sup> Parliament of Canada. (2008a). *House of Common Committees – Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM) – Archive (39-2) – Study Meetings – Iraqi Refugees*, <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/CommitteeBusiness/CommitteeMeetings.aspx?Cmte=CIMM&Language=E&Parl=39&Ses=2&Stac=2224631&Mode=1>

Prior to commencing field research, it was the author's observation that the reactions of the Canadian general public (expressing different opinions through public media such as the newspapers, radio, television, etc.) and of the local and international NGO representatives to a high or low level of overall refugee intake, or the intake of a specific refugee group, will often play a critical role in how resettlement policies are shaped. The strength of these reactions may be due to the possibility that the Canadian policy-making process, in this case relating to Canada's resettlement of refugees, may lack some clarity, and perhaps even transparency. The aim of this research is thus to take a close look at the process of policy-making relating to refugee resettlement in Canada, and at the various sources of influences – economic, legal or humanitarian, and political – that shape these policies, in order to attempt to illuminate the opacity that seems to be attached to them, and to the policy-making system relating to the resettlement of refugees to Canada.

## **CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY AND PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES**

Over the course of the research for this thesis, the author sought to understand the process of policy-making in relation to the Canadian Refugee Resettlement Program, and more specifically, to the resettlement of Iraqi refugees. One of the goal of the research was to describe and help all actors' understanding of each other's vision of the program, what they understood to be the program's goals, and the means to reach these goals. One of the end goals of the author was to increase the conciliation between these actors' visions, and in turn attempt to have all major actors work in a roughly common direction, for the benefit of those in need of protection on a global scale.

To understand this process, the initial aim was to look into the following categories of possible influences on this policy-making process: legal and humanitarian influences, economic influences, and international and domestic political influences. While considering these influences, it was important to better understand the policy-making process involved in determining yearly resettlement quotas and ceilings, most particularly regarding the Iraqi refugee population since 2003.

Clarification was obtained on the types of influences on the Canadian resettlement program through Internet research, and by interviewing concerned actors in Canada. These actors were considered best to be able to offer expert perspectives and opinions on the topic at hand. Although some of the data collected was obtained from anonymous actors in the field who were knowledgeable on the research topic, the main informants for this research were:

- 1- Ms. Debra Pressé, Director of the Resettlement Division, Refugees Branch, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ottawa
- 2- Mr. Michael Casasola, Resettlement Officer, UNHCR Ottawa
- 3- Ms. Glynis Williams, Member of the Canadian Council for Refugees and Director of Action Réfugiés Montréal
- 4- Ms. Grace Wu, Refugee Coordinator, Amnesty International-Canada, Toronto
- 5- Mr. Jalal Saeed and colleagues, Iraqi Federation of Refugees, Toronto
- 6- Mr. Moayed Altalibi, Iraqi Community Centre of Montreal

## **PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES**

MS. DEBRA PRESSÉ, DIRECTOR, RESETTLEMENT DIVISION, REFUGEES BRANCH, CIC, OTTAWA, CANADA , INTERVIEWED 15 JULY 2009<sup>99</sup>

### *Establishing contact with Ms. Pressé*

Ms. Pressé was initially introduced to the author in January 2009, through professional networking. Her contact was obtained through previous professional contacts from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. Contact with Ms. Pressé was re-initiated in the summer of 2009 in the context of this research project. Ms. Pressé was identified as a potential interviewee interviewed in the context of this research as she was considered to be a key expert, with regard to her direct involvement in the policy-making process relating to the Canadian Refugee Resettlement Program.

### *Interviewee's profile*

Ms. Pressé is a very knowledgeable contributor in her field. On many instances in the context of this research project, as well as in the author's socio-professional

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<sup>99</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*



networking process, Ms. Pressé's name was mentioned along with comments that indicated a considerable level of respect for her knowledge on, and dedication to, Canada's refugee program, as well as global refugee issues. The comments received about Ms. Pressé were always indicative of the fact that although the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism did not seem to prioritize the protection of refugees and others in need of protection, that to the contrary, Ms. Pressé and other government staff within CIC were found to strongly support the cause of refugees, and do everything in their power to make the best of the Canadian Refugee Resettlement Program, with the resources made available to their Division.

Ms. Pressé offered a wealth of information on the functioning of the resettlement program, and made sure to address all of the questions presented. The input provided by Ms. Pressé is that of a civil servant to the Government of Canada; although Ms. Pressé was able to provide a good amount of information on the topic at hand, she was of course limited to disclose only information she felt could be presented in the public arena. At one point, the interviewer was asked by Ms. Pressé to turn off the recorder, where Ms. Pressé passed on speculative information regarding a particular budgeting decision that had yet to be confirmed.

Other CIC representatives abroad were also considered, such as CIC Damascus. However, after interviewing Ms. Pressé, it was felt that the information received was all that would be made available on the part of CIC (considering usual part-lines offered by governmental departments), and that further exploration within this governmental department would not bring more insight into the topic at hand.

It was thus because of the limitations faced by Ms. Pressé as a government representative that it was decided to obtain the perspectives of other actors in the field, in order to attempt to draw a more complete picture of the different influences on the refugee resettlement policy-making process in Canada.

MR. MICHAEL CASASOLA, RESETTLEMENT OFFICER, UNHCR OTTAWA, CANADA,  
INTERVIEWED ON 15 JULY 2009<sup>100</sup>

*Establishing contact with Mr. Casasola*

Previous contact had already been made with Mr. Casasola in the process of professional networking. Mr. Casasola was keen on meeting and providing all necessary background information. Preliminary research showed that UNHCR played a central role in Canada's process of policy-making relating to all refugee issues, and that Mr. Casasola was the main interlocutor between UNHCR Ottawa and CIC, the CCR, and other stakeholders.

*Context of interview and nature of UNHCR-Canada relationship*

The interview with UNHCR was the only one out of the six interviews carried out in the context of this thesis research for which permission to record the interview was denied by the interviewee. It was sensed that the UNHCR representative was very wary of possibility that statements made could be used out of context, and thus compromise UNHCR's delicate diplomatic relationship with Canada, or more specifically with CIC.

The nature of the relationship between UNHCR and the Government of Canada was made evident when UNHCR explained why they had not clearly stated the need for

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<sup>100</sup> Casasola, M., Personal Interview, 15 July 2009.

Canada to increase the resettlement of Iraqis, and to increase the overall funding for refugee assistance on a global scale. In relation to Canada, and it is also assumed, in relation to other major donors, UNHCR can only but demonstrate gratitude for their voluntary contributions. Considering the principle of state sovereignty, and the fact that refugee resettlement or any other humanitarian initiative is voluntary, UNHCR considers it is not easily possible for them to express that Canada's contributions may not be sufficient. Rather, there can be only a respectful mention of the fact that further contributions from the Government of Canada would be greatly appreciated.

UNHCR has thus very little room to maneuver with regards to its relationship to Canada. This seems to often be the case not with Canada, but with many or most countries where UNHCR is considered merely as a guest, and must thus walk a very thin diplomatic line in the context of its interactions with the host state. Despite this context, UNHCR's relationship with Canada was still qualified as very positive by both UNHCR and CIC. Casasola was thus speaking to the author as a loyal representative of UNHCR, and a loyal partner to CIC, and therefore had even less liberty in expressing his views than did Ms. Pressé from CIC. However, Casasola still offered a valuable perspective of context that framed Canada's policy-making with regards to resettlement.

MS. GLYNIS WILLIAMS, CCR, ACTION RÉFUGIÉS MONTREAL, AND FORMER ICMC DEPLOYEE TO UNHCR SYRIA, INTERVIEWED IN MONTREAL, CANADA, INTERVIEWED ON 28 JULY, 2009<sup>101</sup>

*Establishing contact with Ms. Williams*

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<sup>101</sup> Williams, G. (2009). Interview with the author on 28 July, 2009. Montreal. [Digital recording in possession of the author]

The author was initially intending to interview the Executive Director of the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Ms. Janet Dench. Due to Ms. Dench's unavailability at the suggested interview date, the author was referred to Ms. Williams instead. CCR was initially expected to be a key organization to interview in the context of this research, due to the fact that it is one of the main and largest advocacy groups in Canada concerned with refugee protection and asylum issues. CIC considered that CCR rarely missed an opportunity to remind them of their obligations, of refugees' and asylum seekers' rights, and of highly vulnerable individuals or groups in the world who would be in need of Canada's assistance. It was therefore considered essential to interview CCR in the context of this thesis research, in order to potentially obtain contrasting perspectives on the subject.

#### *Profile of Ms. Williams*

The interview with Ms. Williams generated unforeseen benefits: she appeared before the Standing Committee for Immigration and Citizenship in 2008, along with the former president of CCR, to appeal to Canadian Government to raise its level of commitment to the alleviation of the Iraqi refugee crisis. Her long-standing membership to CCR, her role as the director of Action Réfugiés Montréal (ARM), and her experience in the joint UNHCR-ICMC (International Catholic Migration Commission) Resettlement Deployment Scheme in Syria in the spring of 2007, made her a key expert on the research topic. These organizations and initiatives are described below.

CCR is "a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and

immigrations in Canada.”<sup>102</sup> Described by CIC as its watchdog,<sup>103</sup> CCR is always at the forefront of all refugee issues in Canada in particular, and routinely sought by CIC and the Canadian media to offer its perspective on any given issue relating to refugee protection or immigration. However, CCR is considered by CIC to be mainly an advocacy group that may not represent the views of the public, while member organizations and individuals consider CCR as an essential entity, without which the voices of the refugees would not be heard, and their rights and dignity not respected. ARM, on the other hand, is a non-profit organization associated to the Anglican Diocese of Montreal, and one of few organizations in the province of Quebec involved in private sponsorship of refugees. Lastly, the UNHCR-ICMC Resettlement Deployment Scheme, is a UNHCR-initiated program meant to help respond to the important staffing needs related to the process of interviewing and referral of refugees to various resettlement countries.<sup>104</sup> ICMC deployees such as Ms. Williams work along side direct staff of the UNHCR to assist with various aspects of UNHCR Missions’ operations. Williams worked with UNHCR Damascus as a resettlement officer, interviewing Iraqi refugees to determine whether they could be referred for resettlement to various countries.

With all these associations, Ms. Williams represented a key source of information in the context of this research project. She had first hand experience with Iraqis in Syria, as well as with resettled refugees and asylum seekers in Canada. She thus also had a thorough understanding of UNHCR’s refugee resettlement system, as well as of the PSR program in Canada.

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<sup>102</sup> CCR. (1993). *About the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR)*, <http://www.ccrweb.ca/eng/about/aboutccr.htm>

<sup>103</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> UNHCR. (2009c). *Resettlement Deployment Scheme*, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a2cde66.html> (02 Oct 2009)

In her different roles and capacities, unlike Ms. Pressé from CIC and Mr. Casasola from UNHCR, Williams did not have any concerns about disclosing any particular type of information or perspective. She was able to offer the most wide-reaching and ‘uncensored’ opinions and observations relating to the questions at hand. Although CCR is generally critical of decisions and policies of the Canadian government relating to refugees, Williams, although critical as well, demonstrated a broad understanding of the system, of the issues at hand, and of the misconceptions held by different actors placed at different levels in the system.

MS. GRACE WU, REFUGEE COORDINATOR, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL-CANADA, TORONTO, CANADA, INTERVIEWED ON 20 JULY, 2009<sup>105</sup>

#### *Establishing contact with Ms. Wu*

The author was initially referred to Amnesty International-Canada by CCR. CCR suggested meeting with Ms. Gloria Nafziger, a Refugee Coordinator for AIC known for her knowledge on Iraqi refugee issues, especially after participating in a fact-finding mission to the Middle East, and visiting Palestinian-Iraqi camps near the Iraqi-Syrian border. However, Nafziger not being available on the suggested interview date, one of Nafziger Amnesty colleagues, Ms. Wu, spoke to the author. AIC was expected to offer a perspective that would be between that of CCR and UNHCR – more moderate than that CCR’s, although less constrained than UNHCR’s.

#### *Profile of Ms. Wu*

Ms. Wu was not as well informed on Iraqi refugee issues as originally hoped. AIC is generally not involved in resettlement, other than when the situation is considered to

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<sup>105</sup> Wu, G. (2009). Interview with the author on 20 July 2009. Toronto. [Digital recording in possession of the author]

be an emergency, such as was the case for the Iraqi refugee population, on which Ms. Nafziger would have been more knowledgeable. However, Ms. Wu was able to share her knowledge on the general responsiveness of Canadian government workers, and lack thereof of Canadian politicians with regards to issues touching refugee resettlement or the rights of those in need of protection.

Wu was in a similar position than UNHCR's Casasola, in that she had to remain discrete in the expression of her views, considering that these could later be used to misrepresent the larger Amnesty International organization. AIC's relationship with the Canadian government seemed more delicate than that of CCR and CIC, although less than that of UNHCR and the Canadian government. Wu's words seemed to be at time calculated, although she did not hesitate to express her views about the current Minister's, or the current government's resistance to listen to appeals relating to those in need of protection and support.

MR. MOAYED ALTALIBI, IRAQI COMMUNITY CENTER OF MONTREAL (ICC), CANADA, INTERVIEWED ON 28 JULY, 2009<sup>106</sup>

#### *Establishing contact with the ICC*

The ICC was located through the Internet. The aim of interviewing the ICC was to gather the perspective of the Iraqi community in Canada regarding the Iraqi refugee crisis, and Canada's response to it, or lack thereof. Mr. Altalibi was the former president of, and current consultant for, the ICC.

#### *ICC profile*

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<sup>106</sup> Altalibi, M. (2009) Interview with the author on 28 July 2009. Montreal. [Digital recording in possession of the author, in two parts, A and B]

The ICC was founded in 1986, and was working at a very low profile at the time due to the fact that most Iraqis were fearful of Saddam Hussein's regime, even while residing permanently in Canada. They knew that if they were known to help regime dissidents, refugees, or asylum seekers, this would put them and their families in Iraq at risk. However, since the fall of the regime in 2003, the centre was revived, and has been involved in the private sponsorship of Iraqis to Canada, as well as in providing services for government-assisted Iraqis arriving in Montreal.

Concerning the fears of the community towards the previous Iraqi regime, Mr. Altalibi considered that a good number of Iraqis are still afraid to use their real names, and still afraid of the remaining elements of the regime.<sup>107</sup> Altalibi himself came to Canada as an economic migrant, and has been established in Canada for over 20 years. Contrary to others in Montreal's Iraqi community, he did not fear reprisals on himself or his family based on his involvement within the Iraqi community in Canada, and his organizations' assistance to Iraqi refugees. Altalibi was thus very candid about his opinion on the Iraqi situation, and on his perspective of whether Canada was meeting its obligation towards the Iraqi refugee population.

IRAQI FEDERATION OF REFUGEES (IFR), TORONTO, CANADA, INTERVIEWED ON 20 JULY, 2009<sup>108</sup>

#### *Interviewees*

- Mr. Jalal Saeed, President of the IFR
- Mr. Hassan Mashkoor, Member of IFR and Board of Directors of the Iraqi Canadian Society
- Ms. Lina Alipour, IFR receptionist, secretary, and researcher

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:01m; 0:03m.

<sup>108</sup> Iraqi Federation of Refugees (IFR). (2009). Interview with the author on 20 July 2009. Toronto. [Digital recording in possession of the author]



### *Establishing contact with the IFR*

Mr. Jaleel's contact information was also passed on to the author by the CCR. Upon arrival at the meeting, two other IFR members demonstrated their interest in participating in the interview.

### *Profile of the IFR*

The IFR was originally founded in London, United Kingdom, in 1991, while the Canadian branch was established in 1995. The main activities of the Canadian branch at the time were mostly to support the international federation in its campaign to advocate in the interest of Iraqi refugees in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey.<sup>109</sup> The main objective of the IFR in Canada today is to appeal to the government or to different organizations to help Iraqi refugees, and to support the Iraqi population in Canada. IFR is a self-funded organization, working only with volunteers, and is the first Iraqi community organization in Canada that supports solely Iraqi issues. It is also involved in private sponsorships, assisting the Iraqi community in preparing and submitting PSR applications.<sup>110</sup>

The IFR is thus regularly approached by the Canadian media regarding questions such as how Iraqi resettlement numbers can be increased, and why Canada is taking less Iraqis than the United States, among others.<sup>111</sup>

The three IFR interviewees did not have uniform perspectives. Mr. Saeed's position was that the Canadian government was not resettling enough Iraqi refugees, and that

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<sup>109</sup> IFR. *Ibid.* 0:01-0:02m.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:03m; 0:05m; 0:07m; 0:09m.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:15m.

the few who were resettled were not sufficiently supported by Canada – financially and otherwise. On the other hand, Saeed’s colleague, Mr. Mashkooor, felt that Iraqi refugees do not need to be resettled in greater numbers. Rather, he felt that they should remain as much as possible in the region, in order to be able to easily return when Iraq’s security situation stabilizes. It was evident that the interviewees had not consulted each other much or at all regarding previously communicated research questions, and regarding the possibility of presenting a unified voice. Mr. Mashrook’s position was that the Canadian refugee program could serve a useful purpose for only a small number of refugees in desperate situations, and that for the most part, all resettlement programs – Canada’s and others’ – were used by individuals who were more economic migrants than individuals in desperate need of protection. Mashrook felt that Canada’s support would be better placed if it was invested in the Iraqi infrastructure and economy, in accelerating the rebuilding of Iraq, improving the general situation of Iraq, and thus allowing the Iraqi refugee and expatriate population to return. A mass population return sometime in the future, in his perspective, would be ideal, and would only seem possible if the bulk of the Iraqi refugees remain in the Middle East region.

## **INTERVIEW GUIDES**

Interviewees were presented with a set of questions that were developed specifically according to their expected fields of expertise (see Appendix).

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Although interview consent forms were not used in the context of the research for this thesis, the author gave the interviewees the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of

their statements used in the thesis before its submission. Four interviewees took this opportunity and requested for the author to modify, add, or remove some of their statements. Some of these requests were due to some inaccuracies in the statements, which may have occurred in the process of the transcribing the interview notes and recordings. Other requests were based on the fact that the interviewees did not wish for their statements to be included in the thesis, for fear that these could become public, and potentially negatively affect their work.

### **CHAPTER 3: CIC RESETTLEMENT POLICIES AND THE CASE OF IRAQI REFUGEES: FACTORS IMPACTING THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES TO BE RESETTLED TO CANADA**

#### FOUR POLICY PILLARS OF RESETTLEMENT<sup>112,113</sup>

The Canadian government's decisions related to its yearly resettlement targets are said to be mainly based on the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Canadian government's humanitarian objectives, the protection needs of refugee populations or of populations in refugee-like situations, as identified by UNHCR, and on UNHCR's capacity and resources in the potential target source countries or countries of asylum.<sup>114</sup>

Four policy pillars guide the global resettlement community – i.e., the resettlement states, and UNHCR – in their assessments and decision-making process. These policy pillars are: the use of resettlement as an individual protection tool, resettlement as a possible mechanism to share global responsibilities, resettlement as a durable solution, and finally, the strategic use of resettlement, a more recent pillar only beginning to gain traction, and being particularly supported by Canada.<sup>115,116</sup>

#### *1- Resettlement as an individual protection tool*

CIC considers resettlement first and foremost as an individual protection tool used for refugee persons or refugee groups in situations of serious physical risk. UNHCR will generally urge all resettlement countries to select the most vulnerable individuals,

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<sup>112</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:33m.

<sup>113</sup> CIC. (2009a). P.12

<sup>114</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:01m.

<sup>115</sup> CIC. (2009a). *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:04m.

such as those whose lives are at risk, and those who have critical levels of physical protection needs.

## *2- Resettlement as a durable solution*

In the majority of the cases, resettlement will be offered to individuals who would not otherwise have access to a solution that could end their state of asylum. Such possible durable solutions include permanent integration to the country of asylum, or a return to the individual's country of origin. Assessing whether resettlement is the only durable solution available to the individual is one of the main components of the assessment conducted by UNHCR, and later by Canadian immigration officers. In the case of the PSR program, the CIC officer will be the one determining whether resettlement is the only durable solution available to the applicant, after determining if the individual meets the refugee definition, and can be admitted to Canada under the full responsibility of his or her private sponsors.

## *3- Strategic use of resettlement*

Resettlement is also used by Canada and its resettlement partners as a strategy to alleviate some of the numerous outcomes of refugee crises. In 2003, the international community defined the strategic use of resettlement as resettlement activity leading to planned direct and indirect benefits accruing to refugees not being resettled. Thus, the strategy does not attempt to resettle as many refugees as possible, but rather, to resettle specific portions of a given refugee population in order to derive benefits for the non-resettled refugees of the same caseload in a given camp, city, or country. Resettlement can be used to reduce the pressures on a given country of asylum, and encourage these asylum countries to keep their borders open to future refugee flows. Resettlement operations in such circumstances also potentially allow for a larger

number of refugees to benefit from previously over-strained resources in the place of asylum, and also perhaps encourage other resettlement countries to begin or increase their own resettlement operations. This strategy aims to make of resettlement an effective and efficient tool for the benefit of all parties concerned – the countries of resettlement, the country of asylum, and the refugee populations themselves.<sup>117</sup>

Canada has been a promoter of the strategic use of resettlement. It continues to support the ideas set out in the *Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement*, including the strategic use of resettlement, and seeks out opportunities to apply them. In addition, Canada has also been focusing on addressing Protracted Refugee Situations through this strategy.<sup>118</sup>

The strategic use of resettlement, as it was originally intended, was notably applied in the contexts of Nepal, Thailand, as well as in the case of the resettlement of a group of Somali refugees residing in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. Upon the initial proposal of the latter resettlement project by UNHCR, Canada and Australia committed to resettling all members of the one specific Somali clan. This clan had been facing on-going and targeted persecution in the camp; the limited resources available at the camp were thus absorbed by the extensive efforts made to protect and attend to the members of this specific group. Although Canada in this instance only resettled 600 persons, when added to the resettlement commitments of Australia, this strategy succeeded in allowing for more individuals to benefit from the limited camp services

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:04-0:05m.

<sup>118</sup> Casasola, M. (2010) Email communication to the author.

available, and for the UNHCR protection officers to have more time to focus on other vulnerable persons residing in the camp.<sup>119</sup>

#### *4- Resettlement as a way to share responsibility*

One of the foundations of the Canadian Refugee Resettlement program is the principle of responsibility sharing.<sup>120</sup> Canada aims to use resettlement to alleviate the human and financial costs, as well as the pressures of refugee influxes on major asylum countries' economies and infrastructure. It is the main reason why Canada committed to resettle Iraqis out of the Middle East, Afghan refugees from Pakistan, Iran, the former Soviet Union (and others especially since 2004<sup>121</sup>), and the Colombians since 1988.

Based on this principle, the plight of Colombians' is considered to be one of Canada's most pressing responsibilities in terms of refugee protection. This is especially considering the fact that Canada will systematically plead for European countries to accept refugees from their own region. CIC thus confirmed that "it is incumbent upon us to take Colombians" in the spirit of responsibility sharing, and considering the fact that Colombian refugees constitute the largest displaced population in the Western hemisphere.<sup>122</sup>

Canada thus prioritizes strategies that alleviate refugee situations worldwide, such as through its membership to a working group on resettlement, and its involvement in the

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<sup>119</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:05m.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:04m.

<sup>121</sup> UNHCR. (2004). *UNHCR – Afghan refugees leave Kyrgyzstan for new life in Canada*, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/txis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=40f2b7ae4>

<sup>122</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:04m.

resettlement of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, and of the Iraqi refugees in the Middle East.<sup>123</sup>

Another context in which resettlement was used to share responsibility was in Turkey. While Turkey ratified the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, it has retained the geographical limitations of Article 1B(1) of the Convention, which only committed it to accepting refugees whose fear of persecution originated from events that occurred on European territory. According to the country's 1994 Asylum Regulation, Turkey will only grant temporary asylum to non-Europeans who meet the 1951 refugee definition while they await resettlement to a safe third country.<sup>124</sup> The Turkish government thus accepts to leave its borders open to more asylum seekers, under the condition that other countries such as Canada accept to resettle some of the Convention Refugees on its territory.<sup>125</sup>

*Perspectives on CIC's claims relating to responsibility sharing*

Some of those interviewed felt that Canada was in fact not accomplishing its fair share, considering most particularly the fact that Sweden had managed to resettle more Iraqis than both Canada and the U.S. combined.<sup>126</sup> Some felt that if Canada did carry its fair share, it was only in certain circumstances: either in situations that seemed highly expedient, or where operations were initiated by the UNHCR. A special UN-led initiative, however, did not automatically imply Canadian involvement; Canada at times would choose to opt-in or opt-out of UN-led resettlement operations. Canada may act independently from UNHCR through the

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<sup>123</sup> Casasola, M., *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> UNHCR Canberra. (2004). *UNHCR Canberra, Fact Sheet – 2004, Question and Answers on Resettlement from Turkey*, p.1, <http://www.unhcr.org.au/pdfs/Turkey.pdf>

<sup>125</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:05m.

<sup>126</sup> IFR. *Ibid.* 0:50m.



resettlement of PSRs, an activity that does not require the presence of UNHCR or of any resettlement operation in the given country of asylum.<sup>127</sup>

*Application of the four policy pillars of resettlement in relation to Iraqi resettlement*

It is partly with the strategic use of resettlement in mind, as well as with the principle of responsibility sharing, that UNHCR appealed to resettlement countries to partake in the large-scale resettlement of Iraqis in the Middle East. Considering the size of the Iraqi refugee population, which stood at approximately 2.5 million in 2007, the strategy consisted in resettling only a portion of this population, in order to keep neighboring countries such as Syria and Jordan open to receiving more asylum seekers.<sup>128</sup>

When compared to the countries hosting the largest numbers of the world's refugee population, however, it was felt that Canada was not assuming its fair share of responsibility with regards to the global refugee population, and that between 2003 and 2007, more should have been done for Iraqi refugees on the part of Canada. It was four years after the onset of Iraqi crisis that UNHCR officially concluded that the refugee flow would not be temporary. Until this assessment was made, UNHCR's strategy was one of containment, where it would not promote resettlement, in order to avoid a pull factor to the countries of asylum where resettlement would be taking place, nor would it encourage voluntary return, due to the worsening security situation in Iraq at the time.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:59m.

<sup>128</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:05m.

<sup>129</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:58-0:60m.

Thus, during this period preceding the beginning of major UNHCR resettlement operations in 2007, private sponsors in Canada had submitted a number of cases to be considered for resettlement. Cases that seemed to meet the criteria were denied resettlement by CIC. When some of these cases were submitted to CIC for reconsideration *after* 2007, many were approved. It was assumed that CIC officers interviewing from Damascus and other locations in the Middle East region must have been aware of the situation in Iraq itself, and of the growing tensions and pressures in the countries of asylum. Considering this, it was felt that criteria for inadmissibility, such as temporary reavilment, were strictly applied by overseas visa officers prior to 2007 to support the rejection of these cases.<sup>130</sup> It was thus felt that Canada could have found different avenues to be more generous and open, and that its lack to do so demonstrated a lack of political will.<sup>131</sup>

#### CIC'S ESTABLISHMENT OF RESETTLEMENT PRIORITIES

Sixteen countries worldwide have refugee resettlement programs with yearly quotas, which together make a total of 79,000 resettlement spaces available yearly.<sup>132</sup> In contrast, UNHCR has assessed that over 500,000 individuals yearly are in situations of asylum where resettlement would represent their only possible durable solution. Considering this gap between resettlement needs and resettlement spaces made available, potential receiving countries must make their own assessment of which individuals will be considered as priority in the context of their resettlement program.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:59m.

<sup>131</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*, 0:36m.

<sup>132</sup> Since the time when the field research was conducted in July 2009, this figure surpassed 100,000, as per the 2009 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement. Pressé, D. (2010) Email communication to the author.

<sup>133</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:04-0:05m.

**Table 2: CIC's Past Resettlement Priorities – Top Ten**

2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
Afghanistan	17%	Afghanistan	23%	Colombia	18%	Afghanistan	18%	<b>Iraq</b>	<b>20%</b>
Colombia	14%	Colombia	16%	Afghanistan	18%	Myanmar	16%	Colombia	15%
Sudan	11%	Sudan	9%	Ethiopia	9%	Colombia	15%	Afghanistan	13%
Ethiopia	8%	Ethiopia	8%	Sudan	7%	<b>Iraq</b>	<b>9%</b>	Myanmar	8%
<b>Iraq**</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>Iraq</b>	<b>5%</b>	Iran	5%	Ethiopia	7%	Ethiopia	8%
Iran	6%	Liberia	4%	DR Congo	5%	Somalia	6%	DR Congo	7%
DR Congo	5%	DR Congo	4%	Myanmar	5%	DR Congo	6%	Somalia	6%
Somalia	4%	Somalia	3%	Somalia	4%	Eritrea	4%	Eritrea	5%
Liberia	3%	Iran	3%	<b>Iraq</b>	<b>4%</b>	Sudan	3%	Iran	3%
Sierra Leone	3%	Tajikistan	2%	Thailand	3%	Iran	3%	Sudan	3%
Other	22%	Other	23%	Other	24%	Other	13%	Other	12%
<b>10,526</b>		<b>10,400</b>		<b>10,663</b>		<b>11,152</b>		<b>10,804*</b>	

Obtained from CIC. (2009a). *Resettlement – One Durable Solution in the Global Refugee Protection Regime*, Presentation for the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University, June 2009, p.15.

\*Projected numbers

\*\* Emphasis on Iraq data added by the author

Sixty-nine different nationalities of refugees were resettled by Canada in 2008. For 2009, Canada prioritized for resettlement the Iraqi, Bhutanese, and Colombian populations, expecting to receive approximately 3,900 Iraqi refugees from Syria and Jordan, 1,300 Colombians from Colombia and Latin America, 1,000 Bhutanese refugees from Nepal, 3,600 African refugees from the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region, Cairo and Pretoria, and 2,000 from the rest of the world, for a projected total of 11,800 globally.<sup>134</sup> In order to establish these priorities, CIC had to consider its previous commitments, as well as its limited budget.

#### *Necessity to consider previous multi-year commitments*

Regarding GARs, in 2007, Canada had committed to resettling 5,000 Bhutanese refugees by 2012. As the first selection team of CIC officers arrived in Nepal in September 2008, the first Bhutanese arrivals in Canada only started occurring in

<sup>134</sup> CIC. *Ibid.*, p.16.

2009.<sup>135</sup> Canada had also in the past committed to resettling close to 4,000 Karen refugees from Thailand. Just over 3,900 were already selected by Canada, and most had already been resettled by the end of 2008. However, nearly 900 of these Karen refugees who were scheduled to be resettled by December 2008 had not yet arrived to Canada. These delays had been due to local floods, coups d'état, airport sit-ins, and other such sources of instability occurring in Thailand at the time. The end of resettlement operations for the Karen group in 2008 would have translated into the increased availability of resettlement spaces for other groups in 2009. Instead, however, most of these 900 Karen refugees were to be resettled in 2009, and some even in 2010.<sup>136</sup>

In addition to Canada's previous commitments to resettle the Bhutanese and the Karen, Canada also committed to resettling a number of asylees in Turkey. As explained above, resettlement from Turkey was strategic: major resettlement countries had agreed to resettle some of its asylum seekers, in order for Turkey to keep its borders open to more potential refugee movements. Many Iraqis referred by UNHCR in Turkey to Canada had already been interviewed and selected by the middle of 2009, and were due to be resettled in Canada sometime in 2010.<sup>137</sup>

#### *Influence of CIC's establishment of priorities on the resettlement of Iraqis*

As can be noted in Table 1 below, the resettlement of Iraqis was considered to be one of CIC's priorities since 2004, although they only began to be resettled in greater

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<sup>135</sup> CIC. (2009c). *Resettling Bhutanese Refugees – Update on Canada's Commitment*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/bhutanese.asp>

<sup>136</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:30m.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:31m.

numbers in 2008. Iraqis were actually the top resettlement priority for Canada in 2008, as well as in 2009.<sup>138</sup>

In 2009, Canada committed to resettling over a 3- to 4-year period a minimum of 12,000 refugees out of its embassy in Syria, with at least 2,500 persons being selected per year under the PSR program. The vast majority of these refugees were Iraqis. This was a considerable increase in allocated spaces to privately sponsored Iraqis given that they will be allocated 7,500 spaces over this period, out of a total 9,900 to 13,500 spaces allocated to PSRs globally during the same period.<sup>139</sup>

For CIC to meet its commitment of 5,000 Bhutanese to be resettled by 2012, more than 1,000 had to be resettled in 2009, 2010, and 2011. This yearly 1000 individuals, combined with the multi-year commitment to Iraqi refugees (4,500 over three years), thus represented a large portion of the usual yearly resettlement target of approximately 7,500 GARs.<sup>140</sup>

*Limited budget, limited capacity: prioritizing cost-effectiveness*

The budget for the resettlement program, determined by Parliament, was left at the same level since 1998. It is for this reason that the total number of GARs admitted to Canada has hovered around 7,500 over the last few years.<sup>141</sup> Considering the limited budget put to its disposal, CIC's Resettlement Division devised a pragmatic and cost-effective approach. It first recognized that it is simply much more cost-effective when both GAR and PSR caseloads are processed in one same location, rather than only

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:18m.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:28m.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:29m.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:32m.

GARs or only PSRs being processed by a single mission. The cost-effectiveness of a potential selection mission of GARs, PSRs, or both, will thus usually be one of the main factors determining whether this mission will be carried out. Although the Karen refugees in Thailand and Bhutanese refugees in Nepal have only been resettled to Canada through the GAR program,<sup>142</sup> these groups were resettled in large numbers by a range of resettlement countries, which also made the selection missions and resettlement operations more cost-effective.

As described previously, an increase in resettlement numbers in one region or of one population would therefore necessitate a decrease in resettlement numbers for another population, in order to not exceed the maximum number of individuals that can be admitted to Canada yearly, with the allocated resources. It was felt, however, that these shifts of priorities had traditionally been done by the government at the cost of a decrease in resettlement from the continent of Africa, while for the Middle East, for example, humanitarian emergencies were often making the news headlines.<sup>143</sup>

Although GAR numbers were decreased by Canada in some regions, PSR space allocations were eventually increased. Such a shift was also in line with the objective for the program to be cost-effective, in that the cost of the PSR program is mostly absorbed by the private sponsors, while that of the GAR program is covered solely by the government.

Compared to all other types of migration, refugee processing is the most complex and expensive. While, generally, applications for immigration to Canada are processed without the occurrence of in-person interviews, this is not the case for refugee cases.

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:02-0:03m.

<sup>143</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:16m; 0:25m.

Refugees must either travel to the nearest CIC mission abroad, or when this is not possible, CIC officers must travel to the refugees' locations. When the processing of refugees must take place in camps, it may take the CIC selection team a few days to get to the refugees' location, and another few days to return. Such journeys on the continent of Africa, for example, may also entail traveling through minefields. In such cases, CIC must also invest in security staff, UN escort guides, and cover the cost of rentals for UNHCR armored vehicles, among other expenses. Considering all these factors, a selection team may only be sent to such a location when the refugee caseload is large enough to make the mission more cost-effective.<sup>144</sup>

However, the in-Canada support of refugees is said to represent far more in terms of costs, compared to the costs of overseas processing. In fact, out of the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) budget, 75% will go directly to GARs in the form of income support, while the other 25% will be transferred to the SPOs to finance services for the resettled refugees. Despite these costs, the RAP budget is still considered to represent the bare minimum needed.<sup>145</sup>

In addition, the Immigrant Loan Program, covering the cost of refugees' transport to Canada and of the medical assessment fees incurred abroad, is an amount that must be repaid by the refugees within approximately 6 years of their arrival.<sup>146</sup> Although such a loan program is implemented by Canada and the U.S. in order to save on their program cost, every other resettlement country absorbs these costs on behalf of the

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<sup>144</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part B, 0:08-0:09m.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:33m; Part B, 0:12-0:13m.

<sup>146</sup> CIC. (2009d). *Resettlement 101*, Presentation by Maryka Nichols, CIC Refugees Branch, in the context of In-Canada Canadian Orientation Abroad Refugee Facilitators' training, Ottawa, Canada, 03 Nov 2009.

UNHCR-referred refugee.<sup>147</sup> In the recent past, a number of other organizations from different sections of public services appealed to the government to eliminate the loans' policy, such as anti-poverty groups, children advocacy groups, and settlement organizations working with newcomers, all linking the loans to disadvantaged youth, and extended years of struggle and living beneath the poverty level. They argued that this loan was of such magnitude, especially for individuals being resettled to Canada with nearly nothing, that it often created an insurmountable burden on the refugee individual or family, pulling them or keeping them away from any chance of being financially self-sufficient, or being able to concentrate on language classes long enough to reach a level necessary to access middle to upper-range job markets.<sup>148</sup>

If the resettlement program would see an increase in budget, it would thus be most beneficial to all those resettled if the loan program were eliminated and the RAP budget increased, rather than resettling a greater number of individuals that would receive minimal support upon arrival.<sup>149</sup>

#### *Cost-effectiveness in the case of Iraqi resettlement*

Being resettled to Canada through both the GAR and the PSR programs, Iraqi refugees are therefore a good example of an effective use of resources. The processing of Iraqis is also perhaps slightly cheaper compared to other groups, considering the fact that most, if not all Iraqis in Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon, are urban refugees living in the asylum countries' capitals.

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<sup>147</sup> Australia absorbs the travel costs for its UNHCR-referred cases, but not for its privately sponsored cases. Pressé, D. (2010). Email communication to the author.

<sup>148</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part B, 0:00-0:02m.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:33m; Part B, 0:12-0:13m.



### *Prioritizing border control and security*

Numerous sources felt that it is not the lack of overall resources of the Government of Canada that is the problem, but rather, its establishment of priorities. The current and previous governments have long claimed having limited resources to dedicate to the refugee resettlement and asylum systems, while they have continually allocated considerably sized budgets and resources to other initiatives such as interdiction, imposition of visas, or other types of measures that result in denying individuals in need of protection the ability to reach Canada and make an asylum claim.<sup>150</sup>

#### **Box 1: Migration Integrity Officer Program**

For Canada, interdiction refers to the practice of denying individuals in possession of improper documentation access to the country. Migration Integrity Officers (MIO) are employees of the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), who are placed “in 46 key foreign embarkation, transit, and immigration points around the world.”<sup>151</sup> Global MIO staff counts 56 individuals. They are involved in the interdiction of approximately 5,000 individuals per year, and in the facilitated entry to Canada of 3,000 individuals yearly, most of the latter being Canadian citizens returning to the Canada.<sup>152</sup> The Migration Integrity Officer program was developed in the context of Canada’s Multiple Borders Strategy, described as a strategy “focusing its intelligence and interdiction efforts on each of these [overseas] checkpoints in order to keep inadmissible and potentially harmful individuals as far away from North America as possible. [...] Passenger analysis units [are] established at Canadian airports to

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<sup>150</sup> Anonymous.

<sup>151</sup> Canada Border Service Agency. (2009). Migration Integrity Officer Program, <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/media/facts-faits/030-eng.html>

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

identify high-risk travellers before they arrive, thus enabling CIC to identify criminals and security threats earlier in the travel continuum.”<sup>153</sup>

Some believed that the Refugees Branch of CIC is not getting the portion of the larger budget that it should, i.e. portions that are being dedicated in favor of other priorities, rather than to the selection of individuals in need of protection.<sup>154</sup>

#### *Influence of security concerns on Iraqi resettlement to Canada*

In the case of Iraqis specifically, the government as well as the media were concerned with potential security issues tied to this group, and implemented more thorough security measures within resettlement program for Iraqis as a result. Some Iraqis in Canada considered these increases in security measures related to resettlement as completely legitimate, considering the complexities in detecting individuals with more ill intentions and less legitimate protection needs.<sup>155</sup>

#### *Influence of Canada's humanitarian tradition on resettlement*

Canada's refugee resettlement program is also driven by its long history of receiving refugees from the time of the Second World War, to the intake of tens of thousands of Vietnamese Boat people, and of many other groups thereafter. Canada, the United States, and Australia have long histories of sponsorship-like programs, past and/or current, that are similar to the current PSR program.

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<sup>153</sup> Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (2002). *Citizenship and Immigration Canada Departmental Performance Report 2001-2002 – Part 9 of 12, Section III: Performance by Strategic Outcome (continued), Managing Access to Canada with a Fair and Effective Enforcement Strategy*, [http://74.125.77.132/search?q=cache:MIJTWKyDM6kJ:www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/01-02/cic/CIC0102dpr08\\_e.asp+interdiction+activities+cic.gc.ca&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&client=safari](http://74.125.77.132/search?q=cache:MIJTWKyDM6kJ:www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/01-02/cic/CIC0102dpr08_e.asp+interdiction+activities+cic.gc.ca&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&client=safari)

<sup>154</sup> Williams G., *Ibid.* and Wu, G. *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> IFR. *Ibid.*, 0:22-0:23m.

Others felt that due to its geography, Canada had always had the capacity to be selective, unlike other countries surrounded by refugee-producing countries. In the midst of growing discourse that divides refugees resettled from overseas from asylum seekers who select Canada as their country of asylum, some argued that Canada exercised its capacity to be selective at the cost of denying asylum seekers their right to protection from persecution.<sup>156,157</sup>

#### *Canada's tradition of resettling Iraqis*

Canada also has a long history of taking Iraqi refugees since the beginning of Saddam Hussein's regime, much before the 1991, 1998, and 2003 wars, and subsequent refugee outflows.<sup>158</sup> This tradition may have worked in favor of Iraqi resettlement, due to Canada's familiarity with this population, as much as it could have worked against this group, due to the host community's perception that Iraqis may be less in need of support than other groups that may appear to be more vulnerable.

#### *Use of the Source Country Class program only when feasible*

The Source Country Class program consists of processing individuals in refugee-like situations who may be internally displaced and experiencing persecution based on one of the five grounds defining a Convention Refugee, with no other durable solution available to them within a reasonable period of time.<sup>159</sup>

Although six countries appear on Canada's Source Country Class list (Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, El Salvador, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, and

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<sup>156</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.* 1h:21m.

<sup>157</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Casasola, M., *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> CIC. (2007b). *Resettlement from Outside Canada: Source Country Class*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLIsh/refugees/outside/source.asp>

Colombia<sup>160</sup>), processing under this program is currently only possible in Colombia. This is due to the fact that the Colombian government has been highly cooperative with Canada in order to facilitate the resettlement of a portion of its population, unlike the five other countries listed.<sup>161</sup> When deciding whether to initiate in-country processing, CIC must thus consider whether it would be safe – or even possible – for CIC officers to be able to regularly access the processing location without endangering themselves, or the refugee applicants they are aiming to assist.<sup>162</sup>

*Possible application of Source Country class program in Iraq*

Iraq does not figure on Canada's list of possible locations for Source Country Class processing both due to the fact that the Canadian government does not have any official presence or diplomatic mission in Baghdad, and to the fact that Iraq is not considered by Canada to be a sufficiently safe country for visa officers to routinely travel to or for applicants to travel to a given processing location.<sup>163</sup> Only Iraqi citizens who are in Iraq and who wish to have an *immigration* case processed while they are still residing in Iraq can file an application with the Canadian Embassy in Damascus, and travel to this location for interviews, medical assessments, and other related formalities.<sup>164</sup>

Considering the security situation in Iraq that is not expected to greatly improve in near future, it is unlikely that Iraqis still in the country could be considered under this category.

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<sup>160</sup> CIC. (2007c). *Resettlement from Outside Canada: Source Country Class – Who can apply*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/source-apply-who.asp>

<sup>161</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.* Part A, 0:16m.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* Part A, 0:16m.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* Part A, 0:18m.

<sup>164</sup> CIC. (2009e). *Canadian Visa Office – Damascus*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/offices/missions/damascus.asp>

*'Likeliness to successfully establish' criterion*

One of the criteria to be considered in the Canadian resettlement selection process is an applicant's potential to successfully establish himself or herself in Canada. More specifically,

applicants must show potential to become self-sufficient and successfully establish in Canada within a 3 to 5 year time frame. Factors such as education, presence of a support network (family or sponsor) in Canada, work experience and qualifications, ability to learn to speak English or French and other personal suitability factors such as resourcefulness will be taken into account by visa officers. However, this criteria does not apply to refugees determined by a visa officer who fall within the categories: 'urgent need of protection' or 'vulnerable'.<sup>165</sup>

Both refugees admitted under the [Urgent Protection Program (UPP)] and those determined by a visa officer as vulnerable are not required to demonstrate an ability to successfully establish in Canada.<sup>166</sup>

Although this criterion exists, it is said to be applied so softly that it would be very difficult (though not impossible) to deny a case on this basis alone.

INFLUENCE OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE SELECTION PROCESS ON IRAQI RESETTLEMENT

For Iraqis in particular, this criterion would have never or rarely come into consideration during the process of selection, likely due to Iraqis' generally strong educational and professional backgrounds, and thus to their high likeliness of successfully establishing in Canada.<sup>167</sup> In cases where high needs individuals could not demonstrate their potential ability to quickly successfully establish, however, Canada's resettlement selection guidelines calls for the application of a 'sliding scale', where higher protection needs would require less of a need to demonstrate the successful establishment criterion.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> UNHCR. (2007c). *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook: Country Chapter – Canada*, p.2, <http://www.unhcr.org/3c5e55594.pdf>

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>167</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part B, 0:16m-0:17m.

<sup>168</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 1h:06m-1h:07m.

Although this criterion did not seem to be applied in the case of the Iraqi caseload, there was a concern with the fact that it was ever applied at all. It had been observed that an informal scale is still being used by CIC to assess applicants' potential ability to successfully establish despite the fact that the application of such a criterion does not agree with the principals of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol.<sup>169</sup> Although UNHCR has asked for Canada to completely remove the criterion, Canada has only done so on an official level.<sup>170</sup>

*Absence of a resettlement program for urgent medical cases*

Since the implementation of the 2002 IRPA, although individuals presenting severe medical conditions can still be denied resettlement to Canada if they potentially present a threat to the Canadian population (either a medical threat, or a physical threat in the case of a mental health issue that could make an individual susceptible to harming others), refugees can no longer be found inadmissible if they necessitate excessive medical care, and/or if this medical care can potentially represent excessive costs.<sup>171</sup> However, Canada's system does not allow for the resettlement of urgent medical cases.

The spirit of the Canadian resettlement program would indicate that Canada would ideally prioritize high needs medical cases. However, Canada's main challenge in implementing a resettlement program that would allow for the admission and settlement of urgent medical cases to Canada is the fact that refugee resettlement is a federal jurisdiction, while Canadian health care is of provincial jurisdiction. To make

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 1h:07m.

<sup>170</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*, 0:08-0:10m.

<sup>171</sup> Casasola, M., *Ibid.*

such a program possible, the federal and provincial governments would have to create a coordinated program, which would allow UNHCR to refer high-needs medical cases to Canada in a swift manner, and allow for the appropriate care would be dispensed upon the refugee's arrival. However, due to this governmental structure, it is hard to imagine that such an effective program would ever be possible to implement in Canada.<sup>172</sup>

The Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program is said to be an effective option to resettle high-needs cases – medical or other – if other avenues are not available.<sup>173</sup>

The JAS program is a combination of the GAR and PSR programs, where individuals receive government assistance (RAP) during two or three years, depending on the extent of the needs, but also have a SPO mandated to provide supplemental guidance and moral support to this individual.<sup>174</sup> However, Canada is said not to have adequate resources available to deal with highly traumatized persons. SPOs in Quebec were reported to being left to themselves to deal with such cases, with little information being made available prior to the resettlement of these high-needs individual, and inadequate networks and resources to provide these individuals the services they require. Although the jurisdiction of such services is provincial and that the level of support offered to other JAS cases in the rest of the country is likely to vary,<sup>175</sup> the problem seems to be omnipresent across the country.<sup>176</sup>

*Influence of the absence of an effective resettlement program for high needs cases on Iraqi resettlement*

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<sup>172</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> Anonymous.

<sup>174</sup> CIC. (2007c). Sponsoring refugees: Joint Assistance Sponsorship, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLish/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>

<sup>175</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:48m-0:50m.

<sup>176</sup> Based on author's professional contacts with other Canadian SPOs.

The Iraqi population has a very high and increasing incidence of severe health conditions. In fact, it was reported that Iraqis suffered of cancer and other severe sickness at uncommonly high levels.<sup>177</sup> Although the new provisions included in Canadian law since the 2002 IRPA at least exempt some cases from being denied resettlement to the potential high cost of their medical care once in Canada, or to the nature of their condition, Iraqis who have conditions that may require urgent medical attention will simply not be referred by UNHCR to Canada, due to the absence of a system to receive and adequately treat these individuals illnesses.

#### *International conventions and 2002 IRPA*

The 2002 IRPA defines the rights that both GARs and PSRs are now entitled to. The 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, incorporated into the 2002 IRPA, will not only affect Canada's actions relating to its own resettlement and asylum systems, but it will also affect its choice of responsibility-sharing duties. For example, if a country is signatory to the Convention, Canada will not normally accept a refugee referral from this country, as it will expect this country to exercise its own responsibility-sharing duties by granting asylum to the individual. However, Canada will accept referrals from Kenya, Thailand, and South Africa, among a few others. In the case of South Africa, although this country has signed the Convention, Canada has accepted to resettle some of its asylum seekers. This is due to the fact that South Africa is still in the process of building its own refugee determination system, for which Canada

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<sup>177</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration & Refugee Services. (2007). *Escaping Mayhem and Murder: Iraqi Refugees in the Middle East*, [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/ASIN-7E8PCS-full\\_report.pdf/\\$File/full\\_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2007.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/ASIN-7E8PCS-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)



provided technical expertise and support. To assist with South Africa's backlog, Canada accepted to assist in this country's efforts to meet its humanitarian goals.<sup>178</sup>

However, it was felt that Canada was failing on many levels to meet its legal obligations in relation to the protection of refugee populations, notably in terms of statelessness. While Canada has signed the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, it has not yet signed the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, which is considered to be the most significant one. As the latter Convention had not been signed, and therefore not incorporated into Canadian laws, it does not provide stakeholders the appropriate tools to protect the rights of stateless persons and to find a remedy to their situation.<sup>179</sup> Canada is said to have had many opportunities to ratify the 1954 Convention. However, the fact that Canada has not yet acted on the issue was seen as a sign that the goodwill and good intentions of Canada were simply absent regarding the needs of stateless persons.<sup>180</sup> In sum, it was felt that Canada will *almost* always seem like it is meeting all its obligations, however, it often does not, especially when it feels that it is meeting its most basic and pressing obligations. It is also feared that UNHCR is too accepting of the image that Canada is projecting – one of a true humanitarian country with excellent programs, in land and overseas. When it comes to having the opportunity to truly commit to measures that may effectively protect all refugees, it is felt that Canada fails, with regards in particular to stateless persons,<sup>181</sup> high needs medical cases, women at risk, or even persons referred under its own PSR program who are not admitted, despite seemingly appearing to meet all the criteria necessary to be granted resettlement.

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<sup>178</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:05m-0:06m.

<sup>179</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:38-0:39m.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:43m.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:40m.

### *The case of Iraqi Palestinians*

It is felt that the ratification of the 1954 Convention would give Canada and other stakeholders more tools to attempt to find durable solutions for stateless persons such as the Palestinians. In the meanwhile, however, the PSR program is considered to be of particular value due to the fact that it could be used to resettle Palestinian refugees.<sup>182</sup> Although it was understood from the perspective of some of the interviewees that Canada could have resettled under the GAR program Palestinians who formerly resided in Iraq, it was felt that Canada decided to resettle them only under the PSR program (through the process of Visa Office Referrals – VORs) in order to avoid a possible backlash from Canadian-based groups that may be known not to favor the interests of Palestinians. It was felt that the Canadian government could more easily resettle this group under the PSR program, instead of through the GAR program, where individuals would have been entirely taken charge by the state. In 2009, Canada thus began to resettle under the PSR program Palestinian refugees who had fled Iraq in 2006, and had since been residing for the most part in Al Hol Camp, Syria, and a few in the nearing camp of Al Tanf. Many more Palestinians remain, however, in these camps and in many others across the Middle East. Although without the incorporation into Canadian law of more provisions that would support the rights of stateless persons, there is little hope to find a solution to their endless state of asylum,

### *Influence domestic law and federal-provincial sharing of responsibility*

According to Canadian legislation, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism must declare to Parliament on November 1<sup>st</sup> of every year how many

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<sup>182</sup> Casasola, M., *Ibid.*

individuals, by category, will be admitted to Canada within the following year. This is referred to as the 'levels plan'.<sup>183</sup> As immigration is one of the only two issues under the Constitution Act for which federal and provincial governments have formal shared jurisdiction,<sup>184</sup> every year, high-level discussions regarding immigration occur at the Ministerial level, at the Deputy Minister level, with each province, and then as a collective. Provincial governments thus have a highly influential voice with regards to how many individuals of each immigrant category will be admitted to their territory. Once provinces determine how many immigrants they are in a position to take, the number of refugees they will receive will be a specific proportion of their immigrant intake.<sup>185</sup>

#### *Influences of the International Community on Iraqi Resettlement*

In 2009, the international community considered that Iraqis constituted one of the groups in most urgent need to be resettled and to merit international concern.<sup>186</sup> In the context of the policy-making process relating to resettlement, Canada will routinely look to other countries of resettlement, exchange on how the resettlement community as a whole can participate in collective efforts to alleviate particular refugee situations. CIC is also in daily communication with its missions abroad, in order to have a more accurate picture of how potential or ongoing refugee situations are developing.<sup>187</sup> In the situation of the Iraqis, the delay in initiating resettlement operations for this group indicates that Canada was notably looking to other resettlement countries to define its

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<sup>183</sup> Referred to as immigration levels plan in CIC. (2009f). Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, 2009, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLIsh/resources/publications/annual-report2009/section1.asp>

<sup>184</sup> The other issue under shared jurisdiction is agriculture. See Kincaid, J. and A. Shah. (2007). *The Practice of Fiscal Federalism: Comparative Perspectives*, McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal/Kingston, p.102.

<sup>185</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:08-0:12m.

<sup>186</sup> Casasola, M., *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:13m.

own course of action. Although the missions in the region of the Middle East must have been aware of the situation on the ground and an apparent need for action, other factors and influences evidently superseded.

#### INFLUENCE OF UNHCR ON CANADA'S RESETTLEMENT POLICIES AND OPERATIONS

Canada works very closely with the main implementer of the Convention and Protocol relating to status of refugees, UNHCR. UNHCR's mandate is notably to identify those most in need of protection through resettlement. CIC is invited to Geneva thrice yearly to attend UNHCR meetings along with other resettlement countries, and to meet with UNHCR bilaterally as well. In the context of these meetings, Canada will participate in finding effective strategies to alleviate the impacts of refugee movements on all those concerned. UNHCR's proposals for action have a considerable influence on the policy-making process related to the Canada's refugee program, and on the strategies adopted by Canada to share the international burden of refugee crises. Canada is known to follow UNHCR's lead, and to seek guidance from UNHCR on which groups are in need of resettlement worldwide.<sup>188,189</sup>

#### *UNHCR's appeals and statements of priorities in relation to Iraqis*

Prior to 14 February 2007, UNHCR's protection strategy for Iraqis did not involve promoting resettlement, though it did not oppose resettlement or any migration solution for individuals if they were able to find such a solution on their own. They appealed to the governments of the main countries of asylum in the Middle East to respect the principle of *non-refoulement*, thus to allow them access to their territory,

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> Casasola, M., *Ibid.* and Casasola, M. (2010). Email communication to the author.

and not to return refugees to their country of origin under any circumstance.<sup>190</sup>

UNHCR advised Canada and other potential resettlement countries to keep the Iraqi population in the region at the time. Thus, by not implementing resettlement prior to 2007, Canada was simply following UNHCR's directive to this effect.<sup>191</sup>

An announcement was then made by UNHCR and the U.S. Department of State on 14 February 2007.<sup>192</sup> In this statement, where the United States announced its commitments to alleviate the Iraqi refugee crisis, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres emphasized the main issues at stake: the plight of the estimated 1.8 million internally displaced people within Iraq, and that of the estimated 2 million Iraqi refugees residing mainly in Jordan and Syria. Mr. Guterres reiterated that resettlement could not be the solution for all Iraqis, especially considering the limited number of resettlement spaces that were available globally. The priority was therefore to make sure that the current needs of the refugee population were met in their countries of asylum. Mr. Guterres urged the international community to provide support to Jordan and Syria, whose economies and infrastructures had taken a considerable toll due to the mass influx of Iraqis since 2003. Another major concern was the impending risk of the general population of these countries to turn against Iraqis, thus putting the security of this refugee population, of the entire region, at a high risk. UNHCR also appealed to the international community to resettle some 20,000 Iraqis globally.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Casasola, M., (2009). *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*, 0:20m.

<sup>192</sup> Casasola, M., *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> U.S. State Department Bureau of International Information Programs. (2007). *State's Dobriansky Outlines Strategies To Help Iraqi Refugees*, <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/February/20070214173408ndyblehs0.6764337.html>

Some Iraqi PSR applications that had been previously denied by Canada were later approved when resubmitted after UNHCR's appeal. However, in principle, the PSR program should not be influenced by any of UNHCR's assessments of global resettlement needs. Rather, Canadian visa officers are to make individual refugee status determinations, regardless of the existence of other types of resettlement programs for a given refugee group. To approve a PSR case, CIC needs only to look at whether an applicant's persecution story is based on one of the five grounds outlined in the 1951 Convention, and whether the applicant is eligible and admissible. Although no official directive was necessarily given by Canadian authorities to deny these cases before the time of UNHCR's resettlement appeal, no directive was known to have been given to apply inadmissibility criteria less strictly.<sup>194</sup>

#### *UNHCR's assessment of resettlement as a durable solution*

At the time of its appearance before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, UNHCR informed the Committee about a survey commissioned by UNHCR in Syria, which showed that only 4% of the surveyed Iraqis in asylum in Syria had plans to return to Iraq. Out of these, only 31% were planning to return to Iraq within one year following the survey, while the others did not have a date in mind.<sup>195</sup> UNHCR was attempting to demonstrate that the problems facing Syria and the Iraqi population they were hosting were not about to disappear, and could very well worsen with the increasingly strained state of the Syrian infrastructure, and possibly of additional refugee flows into the country.

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<sup>194</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 1h:00m.

<sup>195</sup> Parliament of Canada. (2008b). *House of Commons Committees – CImm (39-2) – Edited Evidence – Number 038 (Official Version)*, <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=39&Ses=2&DocId=3459541&File=0>

Although there was a considerable amount of lobbying done in 2003 and 2004 in favor of resettlement of Iraqis to Canada, this was said not to be enough to drive the Canadian government to resettle large numbers of Iraqis at the time.<sup>196</sup> The fact that Canada did not elect to resettle a greater number of Iraqis before 2007-2008 was simply because UNHCR was not referring Iraqi refugees prior to this period. In the context of all large-scale refugee movements, UNHCR's immediate concerns are always to cater to the population's most basic needs: provide physical protection through their Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process and the distribution of legal documents, set up health services and food distribution systems, set up and maintain refugee camps, etc. UNHCR's strategy is that resettlement operations should only begin a few years after onset of a refugee crisis, when it can be better assessed whether the situation in the country of origin will not be improving within a reasonable period of time, i.e. within 5 or 6 years. However, resettlement may be implemented earlier in situations where extra asylum space could be created in a country of first asylum, to allow for more individuals to seek temporary refugee, or in contexts where the asylum countries are experiencing unsustainable pressures on their infrastructure or other.<sup>197</sup>

In August 2007, in view of the deteriorating security situation in South and Central Iraq, UNHCR issued new guidelines stipulating that Iraqis from these regions should be considered as *prima facie* refugees.<sup>198</sup> The issuance of these guidelines strengthened UNHCR's appeal made earlier that year, which called for the

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<sup>196</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:26m.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:20m.

<sup>198</sup> UNHCR. (2007d). *UNHCR's eligibility guidelines for assessing the international protection needs of Iraqi asylum-seekers*, p.15. <http://www.unhcr.org/46dec4da2.pdf>

international community to prioritize the resettlement of Iraqis, especially those from the regions identified by UNHCR as least stable and secure.

*Initiating mass resettlement operations for Iraqis*

In 2007, UNHCR appealed to other countries planning to begin resettlement operations for Iraqis to increase their commitments. UNHCR's appeal was felt to be of most urgent nature, due to the fact that at the time, the estimated number of Iraqi individuals who were expected by UNHCR to be in need of resettlement was considerably larger than the number of spaces the resettlement community had yet committed to globally.<sup>199</sup>

During this same period, a Canadian delegation traveled to Jordan, Syria and Turkey to meet with representatives from the U.S., Australia, and UNHCR to explore the ways in which Canada could help alleviate the Iraqi refugee crisis, and how the resettlement community as a whole could offer an effective remedy to situation. The delegations also came together to assess the number of individuals who would be in need of resettlement, and how resettlement numbers could be divided amongst partnering resettlement countries.<sup>200</sup>

The represented countries aimed to ensure that their actions would not be perceived in an ill manner by the countries of asylum, and that these actions would not risk further destabilizing the region in any way. As such, it was felt that the resettlement operations needed not only to be of large scale, but also needed to be as equitable as possible, with resettlement targets spread across the region in a proportionate fashion.

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<sup>199</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:22m.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:22-0:23m.



Canada evaluated that as Syria was hosting the largest number of Iraqis, Canada should resettle the largest number of Iraqis from Syria; this was to be followed by Jordan, and then others. Canada's second and third priorities were to resettle individuals referred by UNHCR based on one the 11 vulnerability criteria, and finally, those whose cases would be submitted to CIC by private sponsors.<sup>201</sup> The 11 vulnerable categories identified by UNHCR specifically for the Iraqi caseload were:<sup>202</sup>

1. Survivors of violence and torture
2. Members of minority groups who are/have been targeting in their country of origin due to their religious or ethnic background<sup>203</sup>
3. Women-at-Risk
4. Unaccompanied minors
5. Family reunification (i.e., dependants of refugees living in resettlement countries)
6. Elderly Persons-at-Risk
7. Persons with medical needs with no effective treatment available in the country of asylum
8. High profile cases and/or their family members
9. Iraqis who fled as a result of their association in their country of origin with the Multi-National Forces, the Coalition Provisional Authority, the United Nations, foreign countries, international and foreign institutions or companies and members of the press
10. Stateless persons from Iraq
11. Iraqis at immediate risk of *refoulement*

The majority of the Iraqi cases referred to Canada have been referred under the categories of Legal and Physical Protection Needs, Survivors of Violence and Torture, and Women-at-Risk.<sup>204</sup> (See Table 3)

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<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:23-0:25m.

<sup>202</sup> UNHCR. (2007e). *Resettlement of Iraqi Refugees*, 12 March 2007, <http://www.unhcr.org/45f80f9d2.pdf>

<sup>203</sup> Regarding this category, UNHCR adds the following note: “[this category] will also enable the identification of Muslim applicants targeted for membership of their religious community. It will not only apply to Assyrian, Chaldeans, Sabeans, Mandeans, other Christians, Jews, Baha’i, Kaka’i, Yezidis. Interventions for individuals who fall within this priority profile will be prioritized according to degree of vulnerability assessed.” Obtained from UNHCR (2007d). *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> Casasola, M., *Ibid.*

**Table 3: UNHCR Submissions and Departure of Iraqi Refugees to Canada by Criteria, 2007-2008\***

<b>UNHCR submissions and departure of Iraqi refugees to Canada by criteria, 2007 – 2008</b>				
	<b>2007</b>		<b>2008</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Sub</b>	<b>Dep</b>	<b>Sub</b>	<b>Dep</b>
Women-at-Risk	290	32	397	93
Children and adolescents			1	
Family Reunification	9		1	
Legal and Physical Protection Needs	567	72	743	201
Medical needs	42	6	40	7
Older (elderly) refugees	8	3	27	2
Refugees without Local Integration Prospects	46	19	175	583
Survivor of Violence and Torture	553	34	1,328	144
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,515</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>2,712</b>	<b>1,030</b>

\*Provided by M. Casasola, UNHCR, in an email communication to the author, July 2009

#### *UNHCR appeals, and the international communities' response*

In 2007, UNHCR made three appeals to the international community: one at the level of US\$ 123 million to be invested towards humanitarian assistance in Syria, another of US\$ 129 million to support Syria's education sector, and finally one of approximately US\$ 85 million to address the urgent health needs of Iraqis in Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. In the same year, Canada committed US\$ 2.5 million towards UNHCR's first appeal. In 2008, UNHCR appealed for an additional US\$ 261 million to be invested in assisting Iraqi refugees and displaced persons. In response, Canada committed 1.5 million to this appeal.<sup>205</sup>

UNHCR stated in the first part of 2008 that while the resettlement operations were well underway on the side of UNHCR, and that the organization had succeeded in significantly increasing its referral capacity in Syria and Jordan, the main concern had become the low rate of departures of Iraqis from their countries of asylum to their new countries of resettlement. UNHCR thus urged the major resettlement countries,

<sup>205</sup> Parliament of Canada. (2007b). *Ibid.*

including Canada to try to expedite the processes of selection and departures. They also reiterated that between 80,000 and 90,000 Iraqi refugees in the Middle East were still considered by UNHCR to be vulnerable and in need of resettlement, and that as such, a far greater number of resettlement spaces were urgently required to meet these needs. UNHCR also expressed concern at the time about the fact that only half of the value of the financial pledges made by international community had been received by UNHCR by early 2008, and that the received amounts did not represent enough to keep UNHCR's programs for Iraqis operating during the second half of 2008. UNHCR thus called for increased and sustained financial contributions. They also appealed to the international community for more bilateral support to Syria and Jordan, in order to alleviate the pressures on their strained economies and infrastructure.<sup>206</sup>

Despite all of UNHCR's appeals, and the agency's hopes that the international community would respond positively, it is a state's voluntary act engage in resettlement, as there is no existing right to request resettlement from a particular country. UNHCR's funding structure as set out by the General Assembly and its Executive Committee makes UNHCR reliant upon voluntary contributions of states, while only receiving a small amount of funding directly from the UN.<sup>207</sup> Therefore, UNHCR could not grade Canada's response to its appeals, but rather, it could express gratitude for what Canada had done and continued to do. UNHCR could thus also only respectfully request that these actions continue, or that contributions be increased.

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<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> Casasola, M. (2010). *Ibid.*

## FACTORS LEADING TO DELAYS IN RESETTLEMENT OPERATIONS

### *UNHCR operations*

Although Canada committed to resettling several hundred Iraqis during the first year of these resettlement operations (approximately 400 or 500 GARs in 2007), these targets were not met. The low resettlement numbers of Iraqis in 2007 was due to the fact that at this time, UNHCR was not yet running at its full capacity, in order to be able to deliver the large numbers of refugee referrals requested by all resettlement countries combined in time for them to meet their specific calendar or fiscal year targets.

However, the Iraqi resettlement operations did represent the largest resettlement exercise in approximately 2 decades.<sup>208</sup> In 2003, UNHCR was only referring for resettlement a total of 35,314 refugees *globally*.<sup>209</sup> In contrast, when the resettlement operations for Iraqis began, 12,000 referrals had to be prepared by UNHCR for the United States alone. It thus seemed reasonable that UNHCR took some time to gear up all of their missions in the Middle East, that some time was needed for a sufficient number of Iraqis to register with UNHCR, and that also much time was required for UNHCR to make sure that all referrals met the respective requirements of every resettlement country. Regarding the latter, specific requirements included different types of medical examination procedures, different exclusions, different security check procedures, and so on. Therefore, once UNHCR's missions were running at full capacity, their output was said to be 'phenomenal'. Consequently, in 2008, when

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<sup>208</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:25-0:26m.

<sup>209</sup> UNHCR. (2007f). *Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2008*, presented at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, Geneva, 28-29 June 2007, p.32.  
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/47d6933f2.pdf>

the UNHCR referrals were flowing in, and the pressure on the United States continued to increase, Canada pledged to further increase its commitments.<sup>210</sup>

### *CIC operations*

As mentioned above, the Canadian government had declared opening up PSR spaces for Iraqis in the hopes that private sponsorship organizations would have the capacity to meet this target. However, the issue of resettlement capacity in the context of the PSR program was not one related to the capacity of the potential refugee sponsors. Rather, it was directly related to the limited capacity of the CIC office in Toronto to process the high number Iraqi PSR applications in this area – the area with the largest portion of private sponsors of Iraqi refugees – and to CIC’s slow reaction in finding a remedy to this issue of understaffing.<sup>211</sup> Canadian government workers thus had considerable influence in the fact that this issue was not addressed in a timely fashion, thus slowing down the entire PSR process for Iraqi PSR cases submitted in Toronto in particular. Although this instance may not necessarily demonstrate a bias of any kind, it simply shows how particular administrative procedures can have far reaching consequences for some individuals, such as those whose cases were delayed for many months due to this one issue.

### **IRAQIS’ RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS**

The author was not able to obtain statistics on the religious profile of those resettled to Canada. An applicant’s religious affiliation, or the ground(s) upon which a person was persecuted and found to be a refugee, are in fact not captured in CIC’s database, as such tracking would violate principles stipulated under the Canadian Charter of

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<sup>210</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, 0:25-0:26m.

<sup>211</sup> IFR. *Ibid.*, 0:18m.

Human Rights. Rather, the religious affiliation of an applicant would only be found in immigration officer's notes in the applicant's physical case file. The only information captured in the database will be whether or not the individual was persecuted based on one of the five grounds defining a Convention Refugee, whether the individual is referred as a Woman-at-Risk case, an individual in need of urgent protection, unaccompanied minors, and cases selected under the One-Year-Window program.<sup>212</sup>

*Perception regarding the favoring of Iraqi Christians*

The PSR program was observed to be essentially a Christian movement. This was not to say that sponsors in Canada did not sponsor applicants of other religions, however, in the case of Iraqis, it was observed by the visa officers on the ground that Privately Sponsored Iraqis were almost 100% Christian.<sup>213</sup>

Similarly, regarding UNHCR-referred cases, Christians Iraqis had long been over-represented in the registered refugee population in Jordan and Syria, and that consequently, more Christians seemed to have been referred for resettlement worldwide.<sup>214</sup> In fact, while Iraqi Christians represented less than 3% of the total Iraqi population,<sup>215</sup> they represented approximately 14% of all Iraqi refugee registrations with UNHCR,<sup>216</sup> and a large portion of all cases referred for resettlement. To counteract this observed phenomena seemingly in favor of Iraqi Christians, UNHCR carried out mobile registration campaigns, notably in Syria. Iraqi asylum seekers

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<sup>212</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part B 0:22-0:23m. The One-Year-Window is a family reunification program for refugees newly resettled to Canada.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:23-0:24m.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:24-0:26m.

<sup>215</sup> Three percent includes Christians, Yazidis, Sabeen-Mandaeans, Baha'is, Shabaks, Kaka'is (sometimes referred to as Ahl-e Haqq), and a very small number of Jews. The Christian population was estimated to be between 800,000 and 1.5 million in 2003. Obtained from UNHCR. (2009d). *UNHCR | Refworld | 2009 Report on International Religious Freedoms – Iraq*, [http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country\\_USDOS\\_IRO\\_4ae86135c.0.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country_USDOS_IRO_4ae86135c.0.html)

<sup>216</sup> UNHCR. (2009d). *Ibid.*

would be approached in order for UNHCR to evaluate the needs of the population and better inform the delivery of direct services to the population, as well as to promote UNHCR registration for their own protection and for possible access to resettlement.<sup>217</sup> UNHCR's efforts in the resettlement operations for Iraqis thus seemed balanced and non-discriminatory in terms of the applicants' religious backgrounds. UNHCR's main objective was really only to meet their targets for Iraqi resettlement referrals, which were higher than they had been in decades of global resettlement activities. These targets were only hoped to be met by UNHCR, regardless of the religious profile of all of their referred applicants.<sup>218,219,220</sup>

With regards to the PSR program, however, Christians may have also been resettled in greater proportion, simply because of the fact that the Iraqi population in Canada was predominantly Christian and that, like any other group, Christian Iraqis naturally tended to sponsor their own families, friends, or members of their own religious communities.<sup>221</sup>

In addition, there had also been a considerable amount of pressure on the government from certain sections of the Iraqi community in Canada, but most especially from Iraqi Christians. One problematic issue was that some of the Christian Iraqis in Canada genuinely feel that they represented the real Iraqi refugees, or the largest portion of the Iraqi refugee population.<sup>222</sup> However, in reality, although they

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<sup>217</sup> UNHCR. (2008). *UNHCR Syria Update on Iraqi Refugees*, p.3.  
[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EGUA-7BJPPL-full\\_report.pdf/\\$File/full\\_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EGUA-7BJPPL-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)

<sup>218</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:10m.

<sup>219</sup> Altalibi, M. *Ibid.*, Part B, 0:12m.

<sup>220</sup> IFR. *Ibid.*, 0:58-0:60m.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:58-0:60m.

<sup>222</sup> Anonymous.

constituted a considerable proportion of the referred cases, the clear majority of the entire Iraqi refugee population was of Muslim background.<sup>223</sup>

It was also felt that the current Minister of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism, Mr. Jason Kenney, had his own bias in favor of the Iraqi Christians. He was reported to have visited a number of Iraqi Christian organizations during this period, which fueled this perception. All Iraqis – no matter their religious backgrounds – had to do military service, and many individuals of all religious backgrounds were career military personnel. It was thus a stark misperception that Iraqi Christians would not have any of the military triggers that would make them inadmissible for refugee resettlement, although this was a nuance felt to be either not understood or not clearly expressed by the Minister.<sup>224</sup>

This bias was also interpreted through the fact that the Iraqi-Palestinians were only resettled under the PSR program, rather under the auspices of the public GAR program. The arguments offered by the government to explain why these refugees were not considered under the GAR program were thought not to hold, and suggested that the government could in fact have resettled these refugees under the GAR program, if it had the political will to do so.<sup>225</sup> Some concluded that resettlement of the Palestinian refugees under the PSR program was thus another indication of a noticeable bias on the part of the government in favor of the Christians, and in disfavor of all others.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Casasola, M. *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:32-0:36m.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:05m.

<sup>226</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*



## INFLUENCE OF NATIONAL POLITICS

### *Influence of Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and Parliament officials*

The current Minister of Immigration and Citizenship and the country's Prime Minister were also felt not to be open to suggestions aiming to further assist refugee populations in general, such as increasing the yearly resettlement quota, rather than shifting resettlement numbers from region to region and maintaining a resettlement cap. It was felt that the government's actions or non-actions seemed to be mainly driven by politics, and that as such, many actors in the field had become particularly disheartened by the views and attitudes expressed by top political figures, as well as by their objective of drastically restructuring of Canada's asylum system.<sup>227</sup>

In 2008, the Secretary General of AIC spoke before the Standing Committee for Citizenship and Immigration and joined the CCR in its appeals to the government to prioritize and increase the resettlement of Iraqi refugees. More specifically, he appealed to Canada to increase resettlement numbers for the Iraqi refugee populations in Syria and Jordan, and urged the government to urgently consider resettling the Palestinian refugees residing in Syria.<sup>228</sup> It was felt, however, that AIC's lobbying and advocacy regarding Iraqi resettlement had not been very effective on the political sphere, and that with the current conservative government in place, most particularly the current CIC Minister, not many of these issues were likely to move in the direction that AIC would have hoped.

Policy-making decisions relating to refugee resettlement in Canada are officially based on Canada's humanitarian objectives, refugee populations' protection needs and

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<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:00m.

<sup>228</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*, 0:00m; 0:17m; 0:26m.

Canada's available capacity, i.e. where can refugees be accessed safely, effectively, and efficiently. However, these decisions are also clearly influenced by the political level of government, based on the elected officials' consultations with their constituents. To increase the resettlement budget, and thus to obtain funding from the central budget is a complex process which requires a policy shift, and choice that goes beyond a discussion in the House of Commons.<sup>229</sup> This is where the influence of civil servants and elected officials could have some weight in the process of determination of a general direction for the resettlement program as a whole.

### *Influence of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration*

One of the platforms on which stakeholders and political actors may pronounce themselves on this topic is in the context of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

### **Box 2: The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration**

With the creation of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration following the Act of the same name in 1994, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration as it is known today was established.<sup>230</sup> The mandate of this Committee is to:

[examine] orders of references that the House of Commons refers to it. Orders of reference may relate to bills, Estimates or order-in-council appointments. The committee may also study issues of its own choosing. In addition, the Committee studies and reports on all matters relating to the mandate, management and operations of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).<sup>231</sup>

<sup>229</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:06m.

<sup>230</sup> Parliament of Canada. (2008c). *House of Commons Committees – CIMA – Archive (39-2) – History*, <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/committeebusiness/AboutCommittees.aspx?Cmte=CIMA&View=CH&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=39&Ses=2>

<sup>231</sup> Parliament of Canada. (2008d). *House of Commons Committees – CIMA – Archive (39-2) – About this Committee*, <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/committeebusiness/AboutCommittees.aspx?Cmte=CIMA&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=39&Ses=2>

Members of the Committee are drawn from most (or all) parties represented in the House of Commons. Those present in the context of the meetings on Iraqi refugees included 4 Members from the Conservative Party (including one of these members acting as the Chairman of the Committee), 4 Members and 1 Acting Member from the Liberal Party, 2 Members from the Bloc Québécois, 1 Member from the New Democratic Party, and 1 Associate Member from the Green Party.<sup>232,233,234</sup>

The composition of the Standing Committee thus seemed balanced in terms of party representation, other than the Chair being a member of the ruling party.

#### *Influence of the Standing Committee hearings on Iraqi resettlement*

One of the suspected reasons for the increase of the target for Iraqi resettlement in the CIC mission in Syria, is the outcome of the Committees meeting on the issue of Iraqi refugees.<sup>235</sup> Although individuals or groups may express interest in attending, members of the Standing Committee will decide whom will be invited to speak before them. Representatives of AIC, IFR, and ICC were all invited to attend to speak on the issue of the Iraqi refugee crisis over the course of meetings that took place from December 2007 to the middle of 2008. It was understood that the Standing Committee, at the end of their consultations, formed recommendations that would be passed on to the CIC Minister. However, it was unclear what level of weight these Committee recommendations had on the Minister's decisions relating to budget allocations or programmatic considerations with regards to the resettlement of Iraqis.

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<sup>232</sup> Parliament of Canada. (2008e). *House of Commons Committees – CIMA (39-2) – Minutes of Proceedings – Number 038 (Official Version)*, <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=39&Ses=2&DocId=3462719&File=0>

<sup>233</sup> Parliament of Canada. (2008b). *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> The Acting Member and the Associate Member are not present for Committee meetings on a regular basis, but only when topics of particular interest to them arise.

<sup>235</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:11-0:12m.

### *Influence of civil servants on Iraqi resettlement*

Although the Minister has shown to be attentive to Iraqi Christians in particular, the civil servants working for CIC have demonstrated a more balanced perspective.

Another sign that the civil servants within CIC were being driven by humanitarian concerns and true concerns for the protection of refugees was notably the facilitation of the resettlement of Palestinians-Iraqis from Syria. Although this movement only took place under the auspices of the PSR program, it at least showed a willingness to push for the resettlement of the most vulnerable.<sup>236</sup> It was thus felt that government workers were doing their best to make optimal use of the resettlement program in the interest of Iraqi refugees, within a certain frame of limitations.<sup>237</sup>

Moreover, although Canadian decision-makers are strongly influenced by public pressure, the opinions of civil servants will also hold much weight in the decision-making process. From their perspective, Canada needs to implement a program that meets the needs of the refugees who have been persecuted, regardless of their religious background or other elements of their profile, and that Canada should use UNHCR's referral mechanism as the impartial system it is meant to be. The program thus needs to be proportional and reflective of the vulnerable cases referred by UNHCR.<sup>238</sup>

### INFLUENCE OF PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP GROUPS

To better inform their refugee resettlement policies, CIC consults with various stakeholders in Canada, such as the CCR, private sponsors, and others. Private

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<sup>236</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*, 0:10m.

<sup>237</sup> Altalibi, M. *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:07-0:08m.

<sup>238</sup> Anonymous,

sponsors were traditionally consulted by CIC to find out where they expected to sponsor refugees in the year to follow. However, in 2009, CIC decided for the first time to consult private sponsors to find out where they believed public resources should be spent: regarding the perspective of the larger refugee and immigrant communities in Canada; their own assessment of refugee situations worldwide; their direct or indirect contact with refugee populations; and these individuals' assessment of the whether a given refugee situation could be alleviated through resettlement.<sup>239</sup>

#### *Private Sponsors' influence on Iraqi resettlement*

Despite the fact that there was not a considerable amount of lobbying on the part of Private Sponsorship groups, compared to others, Minister Kenney committed to making 2,500 PSR spaces available for Iraqis in 2009. Considering that the total number of PSR spaces allocated by Canada worldwide was 4,500 for the same year, and that refugees from 39 different nationalities were resettled through the PSR program in 2007, spaces allocated to Iraqis represented a proportion of more than 50% of the program capacity, which represented a significant commitment on the part of the government.<sup>240</sup>

However, it is felt that this prioritization of the PSR program over the GAR program caused a shift in focus for the resettlement program that veered away from prioritizing the assistance of the most vulnerable members of the Iraqi refugee population.

Although all resettled refugees must meet the refugee definition, private sponsorship organizations will sponsor whomever they wish, i.e., not necessarily the most vulnerable, or the most in need of resettlement. Rather, GARs are most likely to be

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<sup>239</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:13-0:14m.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:28m.

the most vulnerable, as they will have already been screened by UNHCR and referred for resettlement for this reasons of either high vulnerability, or in the case of the absence of other durable solutions.<sup>241</sup> It was also observed that the idea that refugees should demonstrate a potential ability to successfully establish themselves in Canada is also common within the sponsorship community, who will naturally tend to bring to Canada individuals with whom they have ties with, and that they would be easily able to assist in their settlement process once they arrived.<sup>242</sup>

#### INFLUENCE OF THE PUBLIC ON THE *RESETTLEMENT* OF IRAQIS

While the Canadian public certainly had the situation of Afghanistan at the forefront of their minds considering the presence of Canadian troops on Afghan soil, this was slightly different in the situation of Iraq, where Canada did not participate in the war, or in the peacekeeping efforts. In comparison to the United States, however, Canada seems to have the strongest public support regarding its refugee policies, while for the United States, the strongest supporters of the resettlement program are considered to be at the political level. In order to maintain this public support, it is believed that Canada should continue to focus on resettling the most vulnerable refugees. Although Canada should certainly not stop resettling those who seem to be in less dire need of assistance, it was simply observed the Iraqi refugee population had been considered have different set of needs in comparison to other groups currently or previously resettled by Canada, such as the Bhutanese, the Karen, or the Hmong. Some SPOs have found it challenging to meet the expectations of Iraqis due to Iraqis having had a higher standard of living prior to the war.<sup>243</sup> Thus, although Canada should of course continue to resettle all those in need of this type of protection, it should also make sure

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<sup>241</sup> IFR. *Ibid.*, 0:44m.

<sup>242</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*, 0:09m.

<sup>243</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part B, 0:17-0:18m.

to continue resettling those with greatest settlement needs, simply in order to retain public support for the overall program.

Although it was felt that the one of the reasons for the increase in Iraqi resettlement targets since 2007 was the increase of public pressure,<sup>244</sup> refugee resettlement was also found to be a hard sell to the public in the contemporary context. One reason identified was that there were no clear and immediate benefits to receiving refugee populations. One can compare today's context to the 1950s, when Canada took approximately 40,000 Hungarians in the after the Second World War, and to the 70s, when large numbers of Vietnamese boat people were received in the context of the cold war. In both these situations, the political motives seemed fairly clear. However, in the case of Iraqis, the political motivation to resettle this population may not have been as clear-cut. However, if the public did show alarming concern regarding an issue, politicians were found more likely to act in this direction.<sup>245</sup>

In addition, when stories or issues hit the media, and were thus repeatedly brought to the attention of political actors, politicians are again forced to react.<sup>246</sup> However, very few Iraqi stories were seen in the Canadian media at the time in 2007. One of the few examples of the broadcasted stories was one of an Iraqi woman who was resettled from Syria, after a Canadian journalist had done a piece on her story while she was still in hiding in Damascus. It felt that the story had particular impact partly due to the fact that the woman was fluent in English, and was thus able to clearly describe her situation and string of severe misfortunes. Her ability to communicate in English may have thus enabled Canadians to relate to her in a more significant and direct manner

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<sup>244</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:12m.

<sup>245</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*, 0:19-0:20m; 0:26m.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 0:00m.

than if this story had been recounted through the voice of an interpreter. After hearing the broadcast, a group of Canadian women who had never been involved in refugee sponsorship or advocacy sponsored this woman and her two children to Canada. This story was aired sometime in 2007, at the height of public pressures on the government to increase its efforts to alleviate the Iraqi crisis, and was believed to have had an effect on the public's level of interest in the Iraqi refugee issue.<sup>247</sup>

*Lobbying in favor of Iraqi resettlement to Canada*

In 2008, specific groups within the Iraqi community started lobbying at the Canadian ministerial level. The more vocal groups were the Assyrian community, the Chaldean community, but also other members of the general public. According to CIC, public opinion must be taken into consideration by the Minister, and social action and grass roots movements are some of the most effective strategies to exercise influence on the policy-making process. For example, if a politician is repeatedly approached by his or her constituents or congregation, he or she would inevitably develop a sense of obligation to actively listen, and act. Thus, for individuals to call or write to their Members of Parliament does have an influence on the policies they are registering their input on.<sup>248</sup>

However, while the voices of many regular citizens would be considered to have a considerable amount of weight in the eyes of politicians, some organizations who are often heard by the government are considered to be at times not as effective. A lobby group may thus be considered to only represent this group's view and interest, rather

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<sup>247</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:28-0:31m.

<sup>248</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*, Part A, 0:26-0:27m; Part B, 0:00m.



than those of the public.<sup>249</sup> Although CCR felt it was unfortunate that government held this opinion, they maintained that an organization such as CCR represented the best negotiating tool for individual members, and for small member organizations, most often taken up by their own refugee-aiding and other professional activities. Still, however, although CIC's position with regards to interest groups was understood, it was felt that CCR's call to action relating to the Iraqi refugee crisis did make a difference, especially in the context of the Iraqi refugee crisis, which was not tackled heavily by the media, but rather, by individuals working directly with Iraqi refugees on the ground.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, Part B, 0:00m.

<sup>250</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*, 0:28m.

## **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS**

At the outset of this research, the aim was to identify the different types of influences that shaped the policy-making process relating to the resettlement of Iraqis refugees to Canada. Through desk research and interviews with different actors in the field, the author set out to better understand this process, and to fill in the gaps of knowledge on the subject which had not until now been evident in the literature.

The aim of this thesis was to clarify the purpose of the Canadian government in implementing its resettlement program, which initially appeared to be highly costly, but yet also seemed to allow only for a minimal proportion of the world's refugee population to be resettled. The author questioned as well whether Canada managed to resettle only the most vulnerable refugees, which was understood to be one of Canada's resettlement program's original primary goals, and one of UNHCR's primary goals in implementing resettlement as a durable solution to refugee crises. The reason for the particular timing and breadth of the resettlement of Iraqis to Canada from 2003 to the present was an object of specific interest.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Choice of expert interviewees*

The sample of interviewees used in the context of this research allowed for an exploration of some of the factors shaping the Canadian refugee resettlement program. More varied data and perspective would need to be collected in order to arrive at farther-reaching and more conclusive findings. The potential missing elements to this research could have been the uncensored perspectives, information, and data from the Minister and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, from the Members of

Parliament, and from the government budget – all elements that were not available to the author in the course of this research. Although the information and perspectives collected by the author were all valid in and of themselves, they remained for the most part the personal or institutional opinions in the case of all interviewees except in that of Ms. Pressé and Mr. Casasola. While Pressé and Casasola only offered the facts that she was at liberty to share considering their positions within the governmental system or UNHCR, the others' perspectives were based on some facts, as well as on insinuations of the government's true intentions and priorities with regards to refugee resettlement, and on the interviewees' personal vision of what the principal aims of the resettlement program should be.

#### *Interview structure*

As the author initially aimed to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of Canada's resettlement program, some of the questions that remained in the interview guides resulted in the collection of much data that did not relate to the influences on the refugee resettlement program. The most fruitful questions, however, were those that related directly to the topic, including the facts or personal perspectives on how the resettlement policy-making process takes place, as well as the main elements of consideration for the decision makers of the resettlement program.

The author had also originally suspected that the influences could be separated in three categories: economic influences, legal and humanitarian influences, and political influences. It was found that although some of the influences could be categorized as such, most were more complex, and were closely related to other elements of the larger picture. For example, this was the case for the economic

influence. As explained by CIC, although the Resettlement Division will aim to invest the limited budget in a manner that will optimize the leverage of resettlement activities, this budget is highly influenced by political actors, who are in turn influenced by the Minister's stated priorities, and where both the later and the former are notably influenced by voters' opinions, among other numerous factors.

A synthesis of the main factors and individuals influencing the policy-making process relating to the resettlement of Iraqis, and to the Canadian refugee resettlement system as a whole is illustrated in Figure 2.

### Figure 2: Thesis Findings in a Glimpse

While Beiser had argued that the Canadian government's wish to uphold its humanitarian reputation was one of the main reasons implementing its resettlement program, particularly its small scale, Neuwirth had referred to this approach as calculated kindness.<sup>251, 252</sup> Basok, on the other hand, highlighted that Canada simply did not consider refugees as potentially positive contributors to the Canadian economy. She argued that due to the fact that refugees could no longer be used as effective political leverage against states of opposing ideologies, refugees came to be seen as mere burdens to the receiving state. Basok even felt that Canadian government greatly influenced the idea now rooted in the public arena that refugees are in fact disguised economic migrants whose possible intention is to take advantage of the Canadian welfare system.<sup>253</sup> Casasola had added that the application of the 'ability to successfully establish criterion was a manner in which to reduce the weight of this burden, by attempting to resettle individuals who had the ability to rapidly integrate with limited assistance from the state.'<sup>254</sup>

Similarly, CCR and AIC felt that Canada was often accomplishing just enough to appear it was maintaining its humanitarian tradition, although not far beyond. This was considered to be the case with the minimal support provided by Canada to high needs cases, who were at times brought to Canada expediently, but without adequate support and services made available to them upon their arrival to Canada.<sup>255,256</sup>

UNHCR and ICC also considered that one of the main factors driving Canada to

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<sup>251</sup> Beiser, M. *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> Neuwirth, G. *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> Basok, T. *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> Casasola, M. (2001). *Ibid.*

<sup>255</sup> Williams, G. *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> Wu, G. *Ibid.*

resettle refugees was its humanitarian tradition.<sup>257,258</sup> In fact, one of CIC's officially stated aims is to maintain Canada's humanitarian tradition, notably through the protection of refugees and others in refugee-like situation.<sup>259</sup> However, it seemed evident when looking at CIC's perspective that the main priority of Canada's refugee resettlement programs was for the initiatives to remain effective.<sup>260</sup> This aim could be interpreted as an indication of actual intentions, aiming primarily to maintain Canada's humanitarian tradition and reputation, all by remaining cost-effective, rather than simply aiming to protect refugees and others in need due to national moral obligations.

Stein had noticed a problematic conceptualization in the major resettlement programs, in their aims to become controlled and regularized, while refugee flows are neither ever controlled, nor regularized.<sup>261</sup> Such a conceptualization demonstrated even more that the principal aim of a resettlement program, like that implemented by the government of Canada, is not to resolve refugee crises, nor to attempt to find the best manner to maximize the alleviation of refugee situations. Rather, as highlighted by AIC and Williams, the aim would seem to lean more towards resettling some refugees, although not necessarily the most vulnerable, but only a sufficient number to appear to be resettling an appropriate volume that would indicate that Canada would be resettling selecting its fair portion of the world's refugee population. It also indicated the government's priority to have a structure that would be easily manageable from a bureaucratic point of view, rather to construct a system that could first and foremost address the refugee crises effectively.

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<sup>257</sup> Altalibi, M. *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> Casasola, M., (2009). *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> CIC. (2009b). *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> Pressé, D. *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> Stein, B.N. *Ibid.*

When also observing a decrease in the level of commitment of the major resettlement countries of the time to resettle large numbers of refugees, Stein notably attributed this to the increased unemployment rates in the main countries of resettlement. Although the recent world economic crisis only took place in 2009, the resettlement budget had not seen an increase in over a decade. It was made clear by CIC in the context of this research that the ceiling of approximately 10,000 to 12,000 of refugees resettled to Canada yearly was only due to the limited budget. CIC also explained that decisions to resettle refugees from one location or another were also mainly based on costs; Pressé described the factors involved in a possible refugee selection mission in a remote refugee camp in Africa. She admitted that a group of refugees that would be closer to a CIC mission abroad would of course reduce the cost of processing, and thus allow for a greater number of refugees to be resettled sooner with the given budgetary allowance. This was not to say that the refugees in remote locations would never be reached by CIC, but rather, that there would be a necessity to wait until the number of refugees was large enough to make a selection mission in this location cost-effective.

In addition, CIC indicated that another major factor that guided Canada's decisions in terms of resettlement targets was UNHCR's existing capacity in the potential source country or country of asylum. UNHCR's capacity in a given country is directly related to its donors' investments in a particular country office, or in a particular funding campaign. In the case of a refugee movement in a country where none would have occurred before, or where UNHCR would not have had major activities in the past, Canada and other resettlement states would have to greatly invest in building the

capacity of UNHCR in the region, rather than being able to capitalize on existing infrastructure and human labor already on location. Given the limited budget allocated by the Canadian Parliament to the resettlement program, CIC's Resettlement Division also considered it necessary to try to capitalize, when possible, on previous investments that would have been done to increase UNHCR's capacity. It thus seemed more cost-effective, then, to initiate Canadian resettlement operations where UNHCR would either already have the capacity to provide a sufficient number of resettlement referrals, or for Canada to decide to embark on such an initiative with other states willing to collectively invest in building the capacity of the Agency in a given location, such as was the case for the resettlement of the Iraqis, the Bhutanese, and other refugee populations resettled in large numbers in the past.

#### *Saving costs in the context of the resettlement of Iraqis*

It is arguable whether the Minister's decision to increase GAR numbers for Iraqis ever so slightly, while significantly increasing PSRs, was truly serving to meet the most pressing needs of the Iraqi refugee population, or whether it was only allowing for a group of a lucky few, rather than a group of particularly vulnerable individuals, to benefit from resettlement to a safe third country. The resettlement of PSRs costs the government a fraction of the resettlement of GARs, due to the fact that private sponsors will cover what is generally covered by RAP – RAP representing the largest cost in the entire process of resettlement. It thus seemed to be an obvious choice for a government seeking to meet its most basic obligations at lower costs to favor the allocation of spaces for PSRs, rather than for GARs.

#### *National security, at all costs*



Although, of course, public programs must be liable to the individuals funding them, i.e. the Canadian taxpayers, and that taking this under consideration, the government must ensure to make its humanitarian programs efficient and effective, it was argued by Williams that these cost-saving principals are not applied consistently with regards to matters of immigration in particular. Here, she referred to the seemingly cap-less budget dedicated to keeping individuals outside of Canada. Williams brought to light the practices of interdiction implemented by the Migration Integrity Officers posted in strategic locations around the globe, who have as a purpose to notably stop potential asylum seekers abroad before they are able to make it to Canada to register an asylum claim. Although she acknowledged that Canada must protect its borders and ensure the security of its citizens, she considered as unbalanced the amount of resources that were allegedly spent on interdiction activities around the world, and the fact that no significant efforts seemed to be invested in making these activities cost-effective. It seemed, rather, that the protection of national security was seen as having no limited price. Alternatively, the protection of refugees was considered to be an endeavor that could represent a risk to national security: the *protection from* potentially fraudulent and ill-intended asylum seekers rather than the *protection of* asylum seekers truly in need was thus considered an activity worthy of a limitless budget.

It should be highlighted, however, that no examples of costs related to the practices of interdiction were known by the interviewee, nor was the author able to locate details on the budget allocated to Canada's MIO program. Nevertheless, one could still argue that certain political motives and priorities may at times trump the aim to retain low costs in program implementation, and that fears that refugees would represent a threat

to Canada's national security could also be used to justify over-riding the obligation to protect these individuals under the 2002 IRPA.

IF YOU CAN'T RESETTLE EVERYONE, WHOM WILL YOU CHOOSE?

Despite the fact that the original aim of resettlement, according to UNHCR, was to resettle the most vulnerable members of refugee populations, Stein had observed that faced with an overwhelming number of individuals potentially in need of resettlement, and the integration challenges faced by the resettled populations and their host communities, resettlement communities started questioning who was truly deserving of resettlement. It was notably reported that the fact that Iraqis were not vulnerable in the same manner as Canadian SPOs had been used to receiving in the recent past, such as the Karen, the Rohingyas, the Hmong, and others, may have worked against the Iraqi group, and quickly created a reputation for the Iraqis as being demanding, and perhaps 'not sufficiently' vulnerable. This did raise the question of whether refugees like the Iraqis, having for the most part a formal educated and originating mainly from urban contexts, were truly in need, or even deserving of resettlement. On the other hand, it could also be argued that considering their urban and educational background, Iraqis may not require such a high investment in the services available once in the country of resettlement, which would thus free up resources, and allow for a greater number of individuals to be resettled for the same cost.

Alternatively, one of Lanphier's models of resettlement indicated that when the need for cultural adaptation was too high, there would be a tendency to reduce the volume of resettled individuals.<sup>262</sup> AIC and Williams had highlighted, however, that a true willingness to resettle all those in need of resettlement should logically be followed by

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<sup>262</sup> Lanphier, C. M. *Ibid.*

a financial commitment to allow for ensuing initiatives to become effective remedies to the issue at hand. The resettlement of vulnerable populations would thus imply the need for humanitarian assistance for some time after resettlement has taken place. If the will to support the resettled populations after their arrival in the country of asylum is not present, there is a high risk, as it was reported by Pressé and Williams, for these populations to remain in a liminal state for a number of years following their resettlement. This risk was expressed by CIC, when speaking to the subject of the immigrant loan program, and of the reports from different actors on the highly detrimental effect the travel loans signed by refugees prior to their arrival to Canada were having on these families.

Despite all these considerations, however, CIC admitted that in situations where the Resettlement Division is not given sufficient funds to resettle all those deemed vulnerable and in need of resettlement according to UNHCR's assessment, CIC would rather use resettlement strategically, in order to attempt to alleviate the ill consequences of mass refugee flows in the regions of asylum for as many individuals as possible. This strategic use of resettlement also pre-supposes that voluntary repatriation and integration in the region or country of asylum are the two preferred solutions to refugee crisis, while resettlement would only (and still) be used in cases where individuals could not find peace and safety in their country of origin or of asylum. In doing so, CIC thus seems to have resorted to making the optimal use of the limited budget made available to them for the purposes of resettlement.

It is suggested, however, that the principles supporting the strategic use of resettlement are not applied in the case of the PSR program. While it was considered

that the PSR program allowed for Canada to resettle some of the vulnerable cases that may have fallen through the cracks of the GAR program, IFR pointed to the fact that the initial selection of PSRs was entirely up to the private sponsors, who would not have an incentive to select the most vulnerable. Promoting the increase of PSRs rather than GARs would thus also mean promoting the resettlement of less vulnerable individuals over the most vulnerable members of a given refugee population.

Williams had also noted the absence of a system in Canada that would allow for the resettlement of severe medical cases, which would generally be referred by UNHCR to either the U.S. or other resettlement countries with referral systems that would allow for the expedient movement of these cases. According to both CIC and Williams, however, Canada is in the process of determining whether the creation of such a referral mechanism for this specific population would be possible in the future, especially due to the high number of highly vulnerable medical cases in need of resettlement and of urgent medical care, and to UNHCR's strong encouragement for Canada and other resettlement countries to do so.

#### UNHCR AND CANADA'S RESETTLEMENT POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

Stein had identified another factor that could explain the decrease in resettlement numbers worldwide at the time of his writing in 1983, which was UNHCR's prioritization of other durable solutions to refugee situations, where resettlement would only be applied when other solutions would not be possible to implement. Indeed, according to the findings of this research, second to economic factors, UNCHR's positions and calls for action seem to be the most influential on the decision-making process relating to Canada's refugee resettlement programs.

In fact, when speaking of the Iraqi refugee resettlement context, CIC's actions were always preceded by the actions of UNHCR. The reason for this seems more evident when speaking of the GAR program, which consists of the resettlement of individuals who are referred by UNHCR. In the case of the Iraqi refugee crisis, Canada did not seem to take the lead to call for UNHCR to begin resettlement operations in the Middle East region for this group, but rather simply followed suit after the United States' request for UNHCR to begin resettlement operations for the Iraqi population.

*Influence of UNHCR's directives on Canada's adjudication of PSRs*

Canada only began resettling Iraqis in large numbers – through its GAR and PSR programs – after resettlement operations were initiated by the United States and UNHCR. As pointed out by Williams, and also confirmed during the author's interview with CIC, UNHCR involvement is actually not required at any level for the Canadian PSR program to be implemented. Considering this, one fact that is difficult to explain is why a number of Iraqi PSR cases submitted to CIC before 2007 were denied resettlement, only to be accepted after the beginning of large-scale resettlement operations for Iraqis. Prior to 2007, UNHCR was encouraging countries of resettlement to follow a policy of containment for Iraqis, i.e. keeping Iraqis in the Middle East region in the hopes that the situation in Iraq would improve and thus allow for the population to gradually return. The other aim of UNHCR in encouraging countries to adopt a containment policy prior to 2007 was due to the Agency's prognosis that the initiation of resettlement activities would result in an increased pull factor to the countries where resettlement operations would be taking

place. UNHCR feared that this would in turn further strain the already over-burdened economies and infrastructures of the asylum states.

As suspected by Williams, it is perhaps in this light that Canada made the decision not to approve any PSR cases prior to 2007, considering that another possible durable solution could possibly be in sight for these cases. Upon considering the factors brought forward by UNHCR and CIC, it seemed that their decision was more based on the prevention of aggravating factors, rather than the lack of political will to assist Iraqis.

*UNHCR's dependence on sovereign states' contributions*

It should be noted that UNHCR cannot initiate any resettlement operations without a) the commitments of resettlement states to offer a certain number of resettlement space, and b) the financial commitments of various contributors. Below is a table outlining various countries' contributions to UNHCR per capita.

**Table 4: Country contributions to UNHCR per capita, 2009**

	Population*	Contribution to UNHCR**	Contribution per capita (USD)
Norway	4,660,539	60,642,612	13.01
Sweden	9,059,651	107,885,397	11.90
Denmark	5,500,510	52,132,909	9.48
Netherlands	16,715,999	80,617,231	4.82
USA	307,212,123	640,726,528	2.09
Australia	21,262,641	32,873,505	1.55
Canada	33,487,208	45,561,841	1.36
Spain	40,525,002	39,539,195	0.98
Japan	127,078,679	110,553,715	0.87
United Kingdom	61,113,205	41,997,362	0.69
Germany	82,329,758	54,529,973	0.66
European Commission	499,723,520***	126,947,661	0.25

\*With the exception of European Commission data, figures obtained from Central Intelligence Agency. (2010). *CIA – The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

\*\*UNHCR. (2009e). *UNHCR – 2009 Contributions to UNHCR Programmes, as of 31 December 2009 (table)*, <http://www.unhcr.org/45f025a92.html>

\*\*\*Eurostat. (2010). *Eurostat – Tables, Graphs and Maps Interface (TGM) table*, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&language=en&pcode=tps00001&tableSelection=1&footnotes=yes&labeling=labels&plugin=1>

As can be noted above, Canada only contributed USD 1.36 per capita to UNHCR in 2009, far behind Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and 45% less than the U.S. In net numbers, Canada was the ninth largest contributor to UNHCR in 2009. However, this data should also be put in contrast to the fact that Canada is the second largest resettlement country after the United States. Thus, although Canada does not seem to be one of the top donors to UNHCR, it does seem to contribute to the refugee aiding efforts in various forms. In fact, UNHCR insisted that CIC was considered to be a key partner to UNHCR and leader in the resettlement community in the context of the strategic implementation of resettlement. UNHCR commended Canada's significant participation in the resettlement of the Bhutanese from Nepal and Iraqis from different parts of the Middle East.

Resettlement is still considered to be a privilege for those resettled, and a voluntary activity for potential resettlement countries to implement, rather than an obligation based one of Canada's signed agreements. The principle of responsibility sharing simply implies that the country contributes in some way to attempt to alleviate refugee crises, and assist of those in a state of asylum. According to the principle of state sovereignty, it is entirely up to the state to decide to what extent their contributions to alleviate a given refugee crisis will reach. In such an equation, however, states are left with the upper hand, while UNHCR and other refugee-aiding organizations must attempt to find the best solutions for all those affected, given the limited resources made available to them, and the fact that some levels of the Canadian government will only accept to commit a certain level of budget that would serve to accomplish just enough to uphold Canada's humanitarian image. However, at the level of the Resettlement Division of CIC, it was found that Canadian civil servants will generally follow UNHCR's footsteps, respond to UNHCR's calls for action, and do its best to make the most effective use of a constrained budget.

*UNHCR-CIC relationship at play in the context of the resettlement of Iraqis*

It was clear from the author's reading of the meeting minutes of the Standing Committee for Citizenship and Immigration where UNHCR spoke before the Committee, and from the author's interview with UNHCR, that UNHCR was hoping for Canada to increase the budget allocation to its refugee program for Iraqis in order to be able to refer a larger number of Iraqis for resettlement to Canada, and to further finance the activities of UNHCR in the Middle East region, including the assistance and support for those still in a state of asylum. It was understood that UNHCR was in a delicate position, where it had to both repeatedly express gratitude to all donors for



all their contributions on one end, but yet also continue to appeal to these same donors for more funding on the other.

#### CANADA'S RESETTLEMENT MODEL AND POLICIES

##### *Low volume of resettlement focusing on economic integration*

With his resettlement models, Lamphier's categorized Canada's resettlement program as a low-volume model focused on economic integration, while the Province of Quebec's model was also low-volume, but was said to focus more on cultural integration. However, the 'ability to establish' criterion included in the Canada chapter of UNHCR resettlement handbook would indicate otherwise; that Canada would indeed focus on a low-volume model, but that it would aim for both economic and cultural integration, such as highlighted by Basok and Casasola.<sup>263</sup> In fact, CIC's Minister currently wishes to increase newcomers' knowledge of their civic rights and responsibilities, and increase the eligibility criteria for Canadian citizenship.<sup>264</sup> He also wishes to increase language requirements for both individuals wishing to apply for immigration, and eventually for Canadian citizenship.<sup>265</sup> This is expected to translate into a focus on selecting migrants who are more likely to integrate quickly and easily, and on an informal level, reduce the tendency to select individuals (i.e. refugees) who would not have such characteristics, and would require more public efforts to facilitate their economic integration and cultural adaptation to Canada.

##### *Policy pillars and consultations with stakeholders*

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<sup>263</sup> Casasola, M. (2001). *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> JasonKenney.ca. (2009). *Launch of Discover Canada: The rights and responsibilities of citizenship*, <http://www.jasonkenney.com/EN/4961/101167>

<sup>265</sup> CIC. (2009g). Speech – Minister Jason Kenney, March 20, 2009, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/departement/media/speeches/2009/2009-03-20.asp>

Canada and the rest of the resettlement community agreed on implementing resettlement as a tool for individual protection, as a strategy, as an avenue to share global responsibilities, and as a possible durable solution. Using this framework as a starting point, CIC embarks on domestic and international consultations to determine which groups should be prioritized by Canada for resettlement. These consultants include various domestic stakeholders, and refugee sponsors for the first time in 2009, as well as UNHCR, other resettlement countries, CIC missions abroad, among others. However, Basok did highlight that such consultation processes, as well as the appearance that PSRs and SPOs had some influence on the direction of Canada's resettlement program, was just that – merely an appearance. She argued that the Canadian government had in fact complete control over all aspects of the program, and all decisions regarding who would be resettled to Canada.

*Principle of responsibility sharing favoring some over others*

CIC highlighted that an inevitable consideration is the existence of previous multi-year resettlement commitments, and Canada's commitment to assisting its nearest refugee population in need, i.e. the Colombians. CIC explained that Colombians constituted one of the top source countries for refugees for the last two decades, because of the simple fact that they represented the largest refugee population in need of settlement in the Western hemisphere. Canadians may have also felt less concerned by the plight of Iraqis, compared to that of these Colombians, or Afghans, or other groups, due to their voluntary lack of involvement in the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Thus, from a socio-psychological point of view, it would seem comprehensible, as also argued by the IFR and the ICC, that Canadians would feel less compelled or obligated to assist the Iraqi refugee population, if given the

obligation to choose between many groups in need of a durable solution to their state of asylum.

#### OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS LEADING TO DELAYS

As mentioned above, the cost-effectiveness of resettlement operations is an important consideration in the policy-making process relating to resettlement. In addition, following the period of time necessary to determine whether resettlement will be the appropriate durable solution for a given group at a given time, resettlement operations will take considerable time to get underway, especially if sufficiently substantial UNHCR infrastructure does not exist in the affected region. One aspect that is particularly labor-intensive for UNHCR is the range of referral and procedural requirements asked of UNHCR from all resettlement countries, such as the different formats and types of referral forms, different medical examination procedures, exclusions, security check procedures, etc. Other operational considerations include the start up time for the CIC offices in Canada processing PSR files before they are sent abroad, as well as the difficulty, or near impossibility, due to the numerous factors involved, of predicting when medical examinations, security checks, and other formalities will be completed in order for the refugees to start departing from their country of asylum to the country of resettlement.

#### IRAQI CHRISTIANS RESETTLED IN HIGHER PROPORTIONS

In the case of Iraqis, it was suspected at the beginning of this research that Canada's resettlement of Iraqis was largely a Christian movement. It was also the observation of the CIC officers on the ground that a higher proportion of Christians were being interviewed for resettlement. CIC also admitted that the Iraqis sponsoring individuals

from Canada were for the most part Christian, and thus also tended to sponsor either Christian relatives or members of their former communities in Iraq. Explanations regarding this observation varied: first, UNHCR admitted that the proportion of Christian registrations in the UNCHR office in the regions (14%) was higher than the proportion of Iraqi Christians in Iraq (3%) and that Iraqi Christians constituted a large portion of those referred for resettlement. These proportions could indicate that the Iraqi Christians had stronger cases for resettlement, in that they were less likely than others to find a durable solution in their country of asylum or Iraq. Alternatively, this could also indicate that the Iraqi Christians were unjustly favored over others to be considered for resettlement. However, Williams, who witnessed the resettlement operations in Damascus, claimed that UNHCR's process seemed balanced and non-discriminatory, while others were of the opinion that the CIC Minister gave preferential treatment to Christian refugee groups, rather than Muslims. However, no evidence of such bias on the part of the Minister was collected in the context of this research.

#### POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF DIVERGING OPINIONS WITHIN THE IRAQI COMMUNITY

The diversity of the perspectives expressed by the Iraqis interviewed for this research project was also particularly interesting. It was expected that all Iraqi individuals in Canada would be hoping and lobbying for the government to increase Iraqi resettlement numbers. However, this was not found to be consistently the case. ICC and IFR's Mr. Mashrook had similar perspectives in that they held a positive regard for the Canadian government and its refugee resettlement program. They believed, however, that as much as Canada and others could come together to resettle a large number of Iraqis, this would not bring a resolution to the Iraqi crisis. Rather,

resettlement could only serve as a solution for a handful of individuals, and a temporary solution at best for all those who would remain in the countries of asylum and who would thus have access to a greater proportion of the available support services and financial assistance. They did also see, however, the potential advantage of having the resettled individuals send remittances to the asylum population or to the country of origin, to assist with post-conflict reconstruction.

Contrary to his IFR colleagues and to the ICC, the perspective of Mr. Saeed was that Canada was not doing enough to assist the Iraqi population, more particularly in terms of resettlement. He felt that Canada was not resettling a large enough number of Iraqis, and that those it was resettling were not necessarily the most vulnerable. He argued, notably, that by increasing the resettlement spaces allocated to the PSRs, the government was allowing private sponsors to determine who would be prioritized. Saeed warned that these would not necessarily be the most vulnerable, but rather, simply those who had the chance of having pre-existing ties with Iraqis in Canada, or those who had the chance of being selected by sponsorship groups who would have had their case brought to their attention through a diversity of possibility of channels. Saeed thus felt that Canada should instead increase the number of GARs, in order to assist those most in need, and therefore also free up the likely higher proportion of services and financial assistance these more vulnerable individuals would be utilizing in the communities of asylum surrounding Iraq.

The ICC representative, on the other hand, was of the opinion that Canada was meeting its obligations in terms of resettlement, although he felt that those who were resettled were not receiving enough assistance upon arrival. He mainly hoped that the

government would recognize the work that ICC done voluntarily to assist newly arrived Iraqi refugees, and that with this recognition they could be financially supported by the government to continue this work for Iraqis and also others in need upon arrival.

Based on Pressé's shared perspective, it could be argued that the inconsistency in the message coming from the Iraqi community in Canada may have made their lobbying less strong in the eyes of the government, and therefore less worthy of attention. As was found in this research, other than the lobbying done by Iraqi Christian groups, and the IFR's and ICC's participation in CCR's call for action, neither the Canadian public nor a considerable number of Iraqis in Canada were found to have made public requests for the government to increase its resettlement numbers, or its assistance to Iraq and its people. It can be argued that perhaps one strong and unified voice coming from the Iraqi communities in Canada would have given the Canadian government more incentive to act sooner and in a more significant manner to assist Iraqi refugees.

#### VARYING VISIONS OF THE CANADIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS' CORE AIMS

Those interviewed in the context of this study each held a unique vision of what the Canadian refugee resettlement program should aim to accomplish. This vision inevitably colored the nature of their advocacy, as well as the influence of this advocacy on the policy-making process. ICC's vision of the Canadian refugee resettlement program, shared by IFR's Mr. Mashrook, was that resettlement only represented one of many options available to Iraqi refugees and potential immigrants, that the program is and should remain fair and generous, and that, according to Altalibi, Canada should continue to resettle Iraqis, in the realm of the government's

stated capacity to do so. IFR's Mr. Saeed's vision of the program was that it should focus on the most vulnerable portion of the refugee population.

Alternatively, while the Canadian government's principal aim in implementing its resettlement program is to maintain its humanitarian tradition, the aim of Ms. Pressé is for the resettlement program to be as effective as possible in relieving the risks experienced by the refugees themselves, as well as relieving the pressures experienced by asylum states, other resettlement countries, and UNHCR. Her intentions thus seemed to be rooted in humanitarian goals, whilst being limited by the resources made available to CIC's Resettlement Division by elected officials. On the other hand, UNHCR's hope was for the Canadian government to allocate more funds to its refugee-aiding programs, both abroad, through resettlement or assistance to those living in countries of asylum, and in Canada, through its in-land asylum system. UNHCR thus envisioned the refugee program being used as a tool for Canada to meet its fair share of responsibility regarding the world's refugee population, and that together with the other members of the international community, it would help Canada find durable solutions to these crises. UNHCR's vision and advocacy thus seemed highly effective and influential in this policy making process, seemingly due to the fact that it was based on the principles enounced in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, as well as on the principle of responsibility sharing, which CIC explained were essentially the basis of the Canadian refugee resettlement programs.

Lastly, the perspective of Williams and AIC was that Canada should be using its resettlement program first and foremost to meet the human and moral obligations that derive from the event of refugee situations. Williams and AIC consider that these

human and moral obligations are inherently linked to international and domestic legal obligations, which, they argue, are not being adequately considered by Canada on several levels. Williams held that Canada will always seem like it is doing the right thing, however, when having to choose between meeting its most basic obligations, and acting on moral and humanitarian grounds that would go beyond these obligations, Canada would seem to often choose to follow easier and most cost-effective route.

The main issue with these visions, however, was the fact that they were based on international principles that either Canada had not adhered to or ratified, or that Canada's positions on these international laws was unclear, and subject to interpretation, most particularly with regards to statelessness. Thus, although AIC and CCR would hope for CIC to consider its humanitarian and moral obligations and resettle Iraqis as a result of it, numerous other factors are at play and considered by CIC to be inevitable for them to consider. The perspective of CIC in comparison to the perspective of AIC and CCR would therefore seem irreconcilable. The one element that would seem to have a considerable influence on the government officials deciding on the budget for resettlement program, however, would be the Canadian voters. If AIC and CCR would target these and manage to convince voters that the resettlement program deserves further funding, and that more Iraqis or others need to be resettled, the politicians are likely to react favorably in order to secure their vote in future elections.

In sum, in order for lobbying efforts relating to the protection of refugees and asylum seekers to be effective and to have an influence on the policy-making process, it was



found that these should specifically focus on the ratification of these international instruments, or on Canada's interest in making such legal commitments, rather than lobby specifically on issues for which Canada has no legal obligation to act on. If advocacy movement does not directly relate to the government's core aims and directives, these movements essentially lose their purpose. As confirmed by CIC, the influence of these individuals and organizations on the policy making process will strongly be linked to the way in which their input is delivered, and to the government's perceived relevance of their input.

## **CONCLUSION**

The aim of this research was to identify the various influences on the policy-making process relating to the Canadian Refugee Resettlement Program, more specifically in relation to the Iraqi refugee movement. The author explored pre-existing literature on the topic, which had focused mainly on resettlement trends dating a few decades.

Resettlement had gone from being one of the main durable solutions implemented in responses to the world's refugee crises in the seventies and eighties, to being one of the last options considered. However, resettlement is still part and parcel of Canada's humanitarian agenda, despite its high costs and limited breadth. Thus, considering in particular the timing and the seemingly limited scope of the resettlement of Iraqis to Canada, the author examined the rationale behind the continued use of this durable solution to refugee crises.

By interviewing various actors in the field, including a Canadian government representative, UNHCR, Amnesty International Canada, and others, the author found that one of the main factors influencing the number of Iraqis who are resettled to Canada is the limited budget allocated to the resettlement program, which is determined by the Canadian Parliament, which is in turn mainly influenced by Canadian voters, and the preservation of Canada's humanitarian image. The other main influencing body is UNHCR, which will assess a given refugee populations' needs in terms of durable solutions, and bring resettlement countries such as Canada to take one course of action or another to alleviate a given crisis. Another important finding was related to the influence of public lobbying. Although the public and lobby groups did not have as great an influence in Canada's decision to increase the resettlement targets for Iraqis as they had for other groups in the past, this research

indicated that if and when masses of Canadian voters voice their concern on a particular issue, at multiple levels, this will inevitably have some desired repercussions on the government decision makers.

Although this research was exploratory and thus limited in scope, future research projects on this topic should seek the perspectives of those determining programmatic budgets within the government of Canada, such as Members of Parliament or their staff. A larger sample of Iraqi Canadians could also be surveyed, considering the differences in opinions observed in the small sample used in this research. Parallel research projects on the Canadian refugee resettlement system could explore the policy-making process relating to groups other than the Iraqis, such as the Bhutanese, with considerably higher settlement needs, or the Darfuris, also with high needs, but set in a far more challenging asylum environment.

Of particular interest would also be an exploration of the influences on the policy-making process of other countries' resettlement programs, such as that of Australia, whose program is of comparable breadth to the Canadian one. The American program could also be analyzed, in order to compare the influences on a policy-making process in a comparable socio-cultural context, but within a different frame of political, economic, and geographic factors.

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## **APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDES**

### **1. INTERVIEW WITH MS. DEBRA PRESSÉ, CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA**

1. Could you describe the policy-making process involved in deciding
  - i) how many refugees (particularly Iraqis) will be resettled to Canada in a given year, and;
  - ii) what other measures are taken by the Canadian government to alleviate the current Iraqi crisis?
    - a. What are the step-by-step procedures, from the initiation of a policy to its implementation?
    - b. What factors (economic, legal/humanitarian, and political), influence this decision-making process?
2. Would it be possible to obtain CIC's latest budget for every year since the 2003-2004 fiscal year?
  - a. If not detailed in the published budget, what is Canada's total budget dedicated to humanitarian programs?
    - i. What proportion of this budget is dedicated to Iraq (i.e. total aid donated for reconstruction, assisting IDPs, assisting refugees in main countries of asylum, etc.)?
    - ii. What proportion of this Iraq budget is dedicated to the resettlement of Iraqis?
  - b. What is the yearly cost of Canada's Refugee Resettlement program since 2003? What is the projected cost for this fiscal year 2009-2010?
  - c. What proportion of this cost has been dedicated to the resettlement of Iraqi refugees? If possible, can we obtain a breakdown of these expenditures for the Iraqi group, i.e. donations/expenditures to UNHCR, Canadian Embassy processing, CIC processing costs, Matching Center, Movements costs (IOM services including booking of flights, Canadian Orientation Abroad program, etc.) medicals assessments & flights (Are these included in budget? Or not included as these costs are charged to the applicants and repaid through the Immigrant Loan Program?), Canadian Border Services Agency processing incoming refugees at the airport, funds allocated to NGOs receiving refugees at the airport like 'IRIS', also Reception Houses, Service Providing Agencies, cost per applicant for the Interim Federal Health program, financial assistance for refugees, and costs related to the resettlement of Privately Sponsored Refugees? Also, are there any other related costs?
3. How many Iraqis has Canada resettled since 2003 (or even since 1991, if data is available) under the GAR program, the PSR program, or any other special program (One-Year Program, Urgent Protection Program (UPP), or other – please specify)?
4. According to the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, Canada Chapter, "applicants must show potential to become self-sufficient and successfully establish in Canada within a 3 to 5 year time frame [...] [although] this criteria does not apply to refugees determined by a visa officer who fall within the categories: 'urgent need of protection' or 'vulnerable'.

- a. In approximately what proportion of Iraqi refugee cases is the criteria of “potential to become self-sufficient and to successfully establish in Canada” applied?
  - b. Are other criteria used in the selection of Iraqis refugees?
5. Would it be possible to obtain a breakdown of the profile of the Iraqis resettled to Canada since 2003?
  - Separated by program (Government-Assisted, Privately Sponsored, or others)
  - According to religious group, ethnic background, male/females, family size, age, and according to UNHCR refugee category (medical needs, survivors of violence and torture, women at risk, etc.), etc.

## 2. INTERVIEW WITH MR. MICHAEL CASASOLA, UNHCR OTTAWA

1. What do you think influences Canada’s resettlement policies relating to Iraqis?
  - a. Legal/humanitarian influences:
  - b. Economic influences:
  - c. Political influences:
  - d. Other:
2. Has UNHCR appealed to Canada in particular to resettle (more) Iraqi refugees? If so:
  - a. In what instances?
  - b. What were Canada’s reactions to these appeals, and the results of these appeals?
3. Do you believe that UNHCR, or other local or international NGOs, the Iraqi people living in Canada, or other citizens or residents, have any influence on Canada’s policy-making process relating to the resettlement of Iraqis?
  - a. How so?
  - b. If yes, what is the weight of these influences, and how do they play out?
4. According to UNHCR, is Canada upholding its international legal obligations in relation to ratified, but not incorporated international laws relating to refugees?
5. Is Canada upholding its responsibilities and obligations as a proportional burden-sharer with regards to world refugee issues, and most particularly, with regards to the Iraqi crisis?
6. Has Canada upheld its commitment to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, most particularly in relation to the Iraqi refugee crisis? How so?
7. Is Canada upholding its national legal obligations, commitments, and policies related to refugees, more particularly Iraqis?

8. Is Canada upholding its humanitarian and non-discriminatory principles in the context of selecting refugees for resettlement? (by applying, for example, the criteria of “potential to become self-sufficient and to successfully establish in Canada”, or by not resettling particular medical cases?)
9. How many Iraqi refugee cases have been referred to Canada for resettlement since 2003 (yearly breakdown)?
10. How many have been accepted for resettlement to Canada since 2003 (yearly breakdown)?
11. Out of all individuals/cases referred to Canada, are you able to provide us with the proportion of individuals/cases referred under each UNHCR refugee category (medical needs, survivors of violence and torture, women at risk, etc.) to Canada?
12. If so, are you also able to provide us with the proportion of individuals under each UNHCR referral category that are approved for resettlement to Canada?
13. According to UNHCR, is Canada resettling the most vulnerable refugees, the most likely to successfully establish, or both,
  - a. Amongst the world refugee population?
  - b. Amongst the Iraqi refugee population?

### 3. INTERVIEW WITH MS. GRACE WU, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CANADA

1. What do you think influences Canada’s resettlement policies relating to Iraqis?
  - a. Legal/humanitarian influences:
  - b. Economic influences:
  - c. Political influences:
  - d. Other:
2. In December 2007, Amnesty International Canada’s secretary General, Mr. Alex Neve, stood before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and urged the Canadian government to develop an action plan for Iraqi refugees, that would ensure the following:
  - 1) that multilateral and NGO efforts to provide assistance to Iraqi refugees and internally displaced Iraqis receive adequate and sustained funding;*
  - 2) that front-line states, particularly Syria and Jordan, are provided with the financial support needed to ensure they can provide the level of protection and assistance required;*
  - 3) that more generous opportunities for resettlement become available so that vulnerable Iraqis who are not safe or adequately protected in the region can move to other countries; and*

*4) that there is a common commitment from all countries in the region and around the world to refrain from forced returns to Iraq.*<sup>266</sup>

Does Amnesty International Canada feel that the Canadian Government has acted on any of these appeals? If yes, how so?

3. Has Amnesty appealed to Canada in particular to alleviate the Iraqi refugee situation in other instances? If so, what were Canada's reactions to these appeals, and the results of these appeals?
4. Do you believe that Amnesty, or other local or international NGOs, the Iraqi people living in Canada, or other citizens or residents, have any influence on Canada's policy-making process relating to the resettlement of Iraqis?
  - a. How so?
  - b. If yes, what is the weight of these influences, and how do they play out?
5. According to Amnesty, is Canada upholding its international legal obligations relating to refugees?
6. Is Canada upholding its responsibilities and obligations as a proportional burden-sharer with regards to world refugee issues, and most particularly, with regards to the Iraqi crisis?
7. Is Canada upholding its national legal obligations, commitments, and policies related to refugees, more particularly Iraqis?
8. Is Canada upholding its humanitarian and non-discriminatory principles in the context of selecting refugees for resettlement? (by applying, for example, the criteria of "potential to become self-sufficient and to successfully establish in Canada", or by not resettling particular medical cases?)

#### 4. INTERVIEW WITH THE IRAQI FEDERATION OF REFUGEES

1. What do you think influences Canada's refugee resettlement policies relating to Iraqis?
  - a. Legal/humanitarian influences
  - b. Economic influences
  - c. Political influences
  - d. Other?
2. Did your organization, or members of your organization, appeal to the Canadian government to not get involved in the 2003 invasion of Iraq? If yes:
  - a. How so?

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<sup>266</sup> Parliament of Canada. (2007). *House of Commons Committees - CMM (39-2) - Edited Evidence - Number 007 (Official version)*,  
<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=3205721&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=39&Ses=2#Int-2266917>

- b. According to you, what was the weight of your organization's appeal in Canada's decision relating to not getting involved in the 2003 invasion of Iraq?
3. Has your organization appealed to the Canadian government to get (further) involved in alleviating the Iraqi refugee crisis? If yes:
  - a. How so?
  - b. According to you, what has been the weight of your organization's appeals on Canada's policy-making process relating to the Iraqi refugee crisis?
4. Do you believe your organization, or other local or international NGOs, the Iraqi people living in Canada, or other citizens or residents, have any influence on Canada's policy-making process relating to the resettlement of Iraqis?
  - a. How so?
  - b. If yes, what is the weight of this influence, and how do you think it plays out?
5. According to you, is Canada upholding its international legal obligations in relation to international laws relating to refugees?
6. Is Canada upholding its national legal obligations, commitments, and policies related to refugees, more particularly Iraqis?
7. Is Canada upholding its responsibilities and obligations as a proportional burden-sharer with regards to world refugee issues, and most particularly, with regards to the Iraqi crisis?
8. According to you, among the world's Iraqi refugee population, is Canada resettling a) the most vulnerable refugees, b) those most likely to successfully establish in Canada, or c) both?

5. INTERVIEW WITH MS. GLYNIS WILLIAMS, CCR, ACTION RÉFUGIÉS MONTREAL, AND FORMER ICMC DEPLOYEE TO UNHCR SYRIA

1. What do you think influences Canada's resettlement policies relating to Iraqis
  - a. Legal/humanitarian influences
  - b. Economic influences
  - c. Political influences
  - d. Other?
2. Did CCR appeal to the Canadian government to not get involved in the 2003 invasion of Iraq? If yes:
  - a. How so?
  - b. What was the weight of CCR's appeal in Canada's decision relating to not getting involved in the 2003 invasion of Iraq?
3. Has CCR appealed to the Canadian government to get (further) involved in alleviating the Iraqi refugee crisis? If yes:
  - a. How so?

- b. What has been the weight of CCR's appeals Canada's policy-making process relating to the Iraqi refugee crisis?
- 4. Do you believe the Canadian Council for Refugees, or other local or international NGOs, the Iraqi people living in Canada, or other citizens or residents, have any influence on Canada's policy-making process relating to the resettlement of Iraqis?
  - a. How so?
  - b. If yes, what is the weight of this influence, and how does it play out?
- 5. Is Canada upholding its international legal obligations in relation to ratified, but not incorporated international laws relating to refugees?
- 6. Is Canada upholding its national legal obligations, commitments, and policies related to refugees, more particularly Iraqis?
- 7. Is Canada upholding its responsibilities and obligations as a proportional burden-sharer with regards to world refugee issues, and most particularly, with regards to the Iraqi crisis?
- 8. Is Canada upholding its humanitarian and non-discriminatory principles in the context of selecting refugees for resettlement? (by applying, for example, the criteria of "potential to become self-sufficient and to successfully establish in Canada", or by not resettling particular medical cases?)
- 9. Is Canada resettling the most vulnerable refugees, the most likely to successfully establish, or both,
  - a. Amongst the world refugee population?
  - b. Amongst the Iraqi refugee population?

6. INTERVIEW WITH MR. MOAYED ALTALIBI, IRAQI COMMUNITY CENTER OF MONTREAL

- 1. What do you think influences Canada's refugee resettlement policies relating to Iraqis
  - a. Legal/humanitarian influences
  - b. Economic influences
  - c. Political influences
  - d. Other?
- 2. Did your organization, or members of your organization, appeal to the Canadian government to not get involved in the 2003 invasion of Iraq? If yes:
  - a. How so?
  - b. According to you, what was the weight of your organization's appeal in Canada's decision relating to not getting involved in the 2003 invasion of Iraq?



3. Has your organization appealed to the Canadian government to get (further) involved in alleviating the Iraqi refugee crisis? If yes:
  - a. How so?
  - b. According to you, what has been the weight of your organization's appeals on Canada's policy-making process relating to the Iraqi refugee crisis?
4. Do you believe your organization, or other local or international NGOs, the Iraqi people living in Canada, or other citizens or residents, have any influence on Canada's policy-making process relating to the resettlement of Iraqis?
  - a. How so?
  - b. If yes, what is the weight of this influence, and how do you think it plays out?
5. According to you, is Canada upholding its international legal obligations in relation to international laws relating to refugees?
6. Is Canada upholding its national legal obligations, commitments, and policies related to refugees, more particularly Iraqis?
7. Is Canada upholding its responsibilities and obligations as a proportional burden-sharer with regards to world refugee issues, and most particularly, with regards to the Iraqi crisis?
8. According to you, among the world's Iraqi refugee population, is Canada resettling a) the most vulnerable refugees, b) those most likely to successfully establish in Canada, or c) both?