

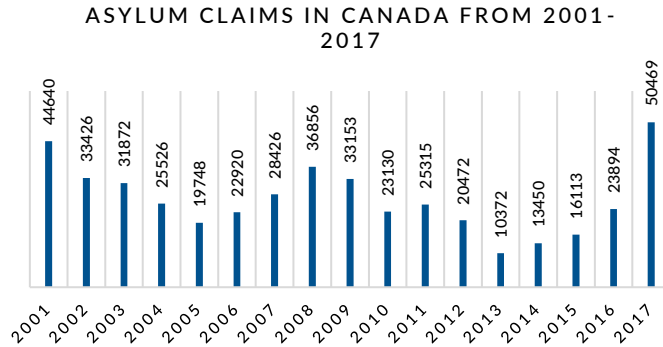


Irregular Crossings at The Border: Challenging Myths and Preconceptions

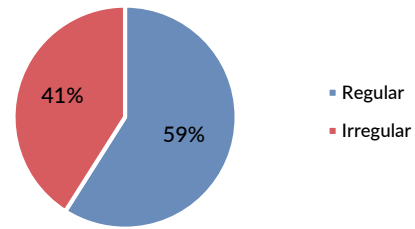
4/16/2018

MOST ASYLUM SEEKERS ARRIVE BY REGULAR MEANS

Should they arrive irregularly to seek asylum, this is not a crime



2017 ASYLUM CLAIMS DISTRIBUTION



- In 2017, 50,469 claims were made: this is a peak compared to the last ten years, but comparable to the figure in 2001 of 44,640.
- Under Canadian law, it is not a crime to cross a border without authorization, **IF** this is to seek asylum.
- Due to the circumstances they are fleeing, asylum seekers are often compelled to enter a territory without the required travel documents or authorizations.

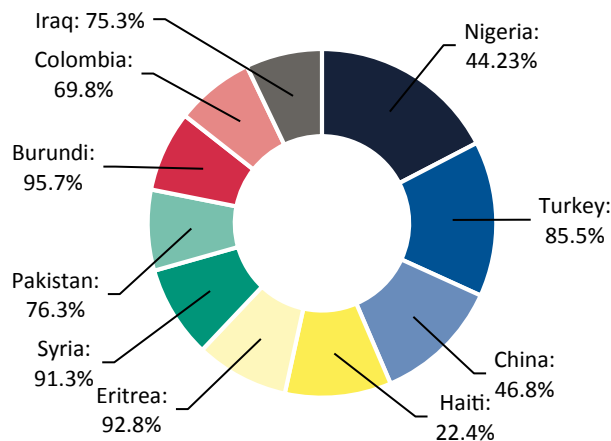
MOST ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE RECOGNIZED AS FLEEING VIOLENCE OR PERSECUTION

Refugee status must be determined on a case-by-case basis

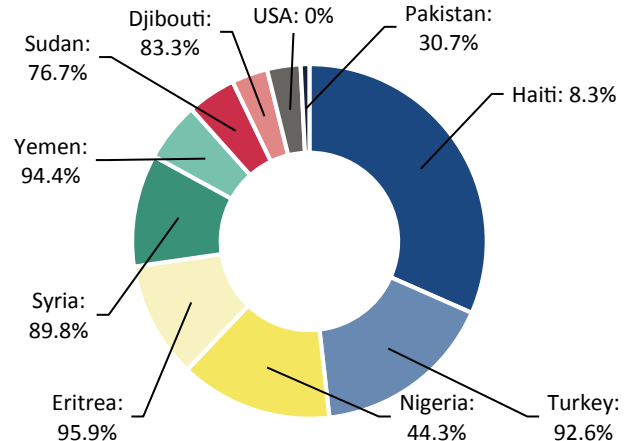
2017 Trends in Asylum Claims

- The national acceptance rate of asylum claims is 63.12 per cent
- The national acceptance rate of irregular asylum claims is 53.29 per cent

All Claims: Top 10 Source Countries by finalized claims (percentage: acceptance rate)



Irregular Claims: Top 10 Source Countries by finalized claims (percentage: acceptance rate)



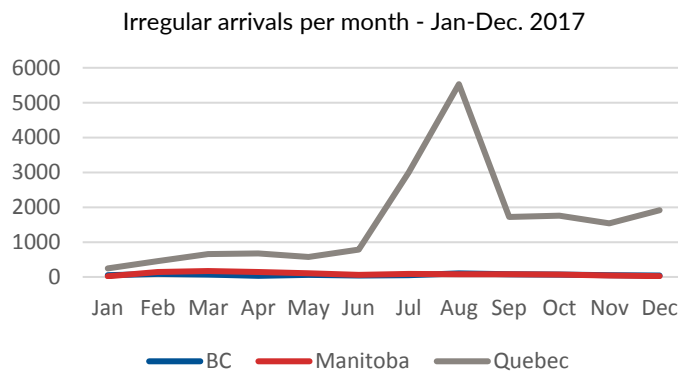


- As the statistics above show, amongst the top 10 source countries of asylum seekers, the highest acceptance rates by the IRB come from source countries in conflict.
- The national acceptance rate for asylum seekers has remained relatively unchanged over the last three years: around **63 per cent** of all finalized claims.
- Since the U.S. administration’s decision to stop renewing TPS designations for Salvadorans and Hondurans, and DACA status holders (mainly Mexicans), there has been speculations of spikes in their asylum claims to Canada. However, there has been no increase in claims made at the border by persons originally from such countries.

CANADA’S BORDER REMAINS SECURE

Asylum seekers are not a threat to public safety

- Claimants who cross the border irregularly are intercepted by the RCMP, once they reach Canadian soil.
- The RCMP is stationed full time at Roxham Road near the Lacolle border, where most of the 91 per cent of irregular arrivals take place, as the graph below demonstrates.



- Regardless of regular or irregular arrival, claimants are checked by the RCMP and CBSA for potential threats to public security and health.
- According to the CBSA in October 2017, **less than one percent** of claimants arriving irregularly had a serious criminal background.

CANADA’S ASYLUM SYSTEM IS NOT BROKEN

Appropriate measures are in place to adapt to the increase in asylum seekers

The Government of Canada adapted to the increase with measures that reduced congestions at land PoEs and strengthened asylum processing capacity:

- Processing capacity of claims increased in Canada by 50% since June 2017.
- The 2018 GoC Budget includes \$173.2 million to strengthen both border security and IRB’s processing capacity.
- Congestion at land PoEs were reduced through modifications in the eligibility examination process.



UNHCR CANADA ASSESSES THE ASYLUM SITUATION REGULARLY

Our communications are targeting misinformation

This briefing is based on the broad work of UNHCR’s Canada office on protection and border issues. We have dedicated activities to analyse and engage on issues related to the situation at the U.S.-Canada border and the Canadian asylum system.

Among other responsibilities, the Office produces and disseminates accessible infographics, charts and factsheets to asylum seekers. Many claimants who arrive irregularly relied on advice of friends, community members and internet information—often factually inaccurate or intentionally misleading—on how to obtain status in Canada upon entry. The documents provide asylum seekers (arriving from or transiting through the U.S.) information about the STCA, the Canadian asylum system, Canadian winter weather, etc.

We are in constant communication with the Government of Canada, provincial agencies, and civil society organizations to share information and analysis. Through our website and public information platforms, as well as social media, we will continue to promote public awareness. We will also be convening a roundtable event with stakeholders in Montreal, later this month. Stay tuned for more updates!

The Safe Third-Country Agreement (STCA) between U.S. and Canada:

Unless a claimant arriving to Canada from the U.S. meets an exemption of the STCA, he or she will be returned to the U.S.

Exemptions include:

- family ties in Canada
- possession of a Canadian visa document
- whether the claimant is an unaccompanied minor

Examples of UNHCR Canada fact sheets for asylum seekers:

The image displays three UNHCR Canada fact sheets. The first, 'WHO CAN GET REFUGEE PROTECTION IN CANADA?', outlines criteria such as race, religion, social group, and political opinion. The second, 'WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO CLAIM ASYLUM IN CANADA?', details eligibility requirements and consequences of being found ineligible. The third, 'HOW TO PROVE YOUR LINK TO FAMILY MEMBERS IN CANADA', provides guidance on documentation and proof of relationships for family members.



APPENDIX:



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CLAIM ASYLUM AT THE BORDER?

CLAIMING AT AN OFFICIAL BORDER POST:



An immigration officer at the border will decide if you meet one of the exceptions under the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA). Read our document [“Who can claim asylum at the border?”](#) and get legal advice before you claim asylum in Canada.

CLAIMING AT THE BORDER IN-BETWEEN OFFICIAL BORDER POSTS:

