



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

JUN 14 2017
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MAYOR'S OFFICE

JUN 20 2017

VICTORIA, B.C.

Lisa

Dear Mayor ~~Helps~~:

Thank you for your letter of May 10, 2017, regarding the refugee resettlement processing and settlement system across Canada, with a focus on private sponsorship.

As noted in your letter, Canada has a strong tradition of welcoming newcomers and providing sanctuary for people fleeing persecution. In 2016, Canada was the second largest refugee resettlement country in the world. The Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program is representative of Canada's spirit of helping those in need, and as you note, private sponsorship is a proven way of integrating refugees. Over the last 30 years, Canada has welcomed more than 288,000 refugees through private sponsorship. This year, Canada has committed to resettling 16,000 privately sponsored refugees, which is more than triple the number of average annual admissions from 2010-2014 (5,094). Canada is the only country with a large private sponsorship program, and is often cited as a model for other countries.

I share your views that processing times in the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program are too lengthy, and that timely processing is important. Following the successful completion of our response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, the Government is taking concrete steps to reduce the current backlog. Further, the

Her Worship Lisa Helps
Mayor of Victoria
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, British Columbia
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Government has recently committed to decrease the average wait times of privately sponsored refugees to approximately 12 months by 2019.

I appreciate your commitment to foster a diverse, inclusive atmosphere in your community, and to working with partners in the federal government on Canada's refugee resettlement processing and settlement system. The way that Canadians have welcomed those seeking a better future is nothing short of admirable, and the Government of Canada is committed to maintaining Canada's long-standing tradition of helping the world's most vulnerable.

I am forwarding, for his information, a copy of our exchange of correspondence to the Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin", with a large, stylized flourish on the left side.