



CANADIAN ARAB
INSTITUTE | INSTITUT
CANADO-ARABE

JUNE 2014

ONE IN FIVE REFUGEES TO CANADA AN ARAB

Data Acquired by CAI Also Shows One in Five Arab Immigrants Started Out As a Refugee Claimant

KAREEM EL-ASSAL

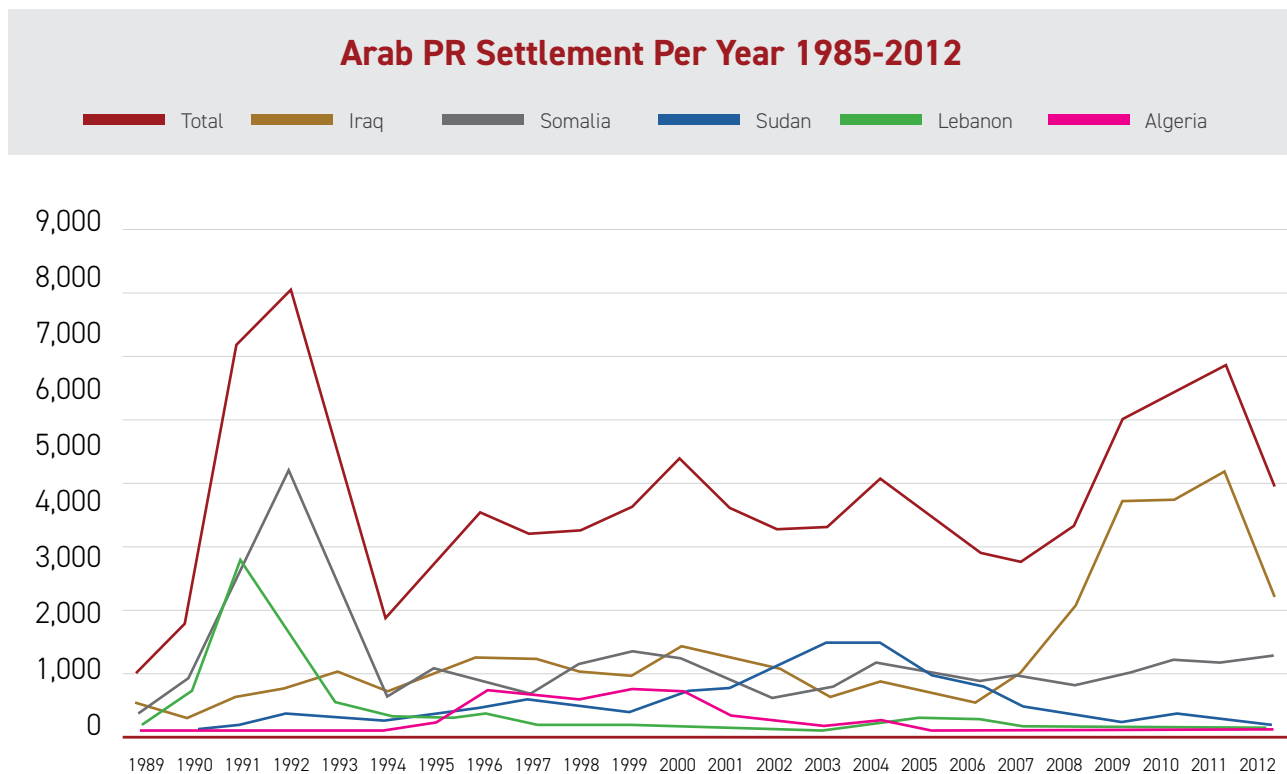
According to CAI analysis of Citizenship and Immigration Canada data, of the 120,373 refugees that gained permanent residence status in Canada between 2008 and 2012, 22.4% originated from Arab countries. Most Arab refugees accepted in Canada during this period were from Iraq, Somalia and Sudan, with nearly two-thirds of total Arab refugees arriving between 2008 and 2012 originating from Iraq.

Overall, 102,470 Arab refugees obtained permanent residence (or "landed") status between 1985 and 2012. This figure represents about 19.4% of the 527,025 Arabs who landed in Canada during this period.

Further analysis shows about 60% of Arab refugees have opted to settle in Ontario, followed by Quebec (17.3%). However, between 2008 and 2012, both Alberta and British Columbia surpassed Quebec in Arab refugee intake.

Top source countries of Arab refugees in Canada

Arab refugee intake was highest in 1991 and 1992, when Canada granted permanent residence status to 7,105 and 8,020 Arab refugees, respectively. Most of the refugees during these two years came from Lebanon, Somalia and Iraq as a result of conflict in these countries. Prior to 1991, the number of Arab refugees admitted to Canada was much lower, averaging about 658 per year (between 1985 and 1990). The average intake of Arab refugees granted permanent residence between 1992 and 2012 was 4162 per year.



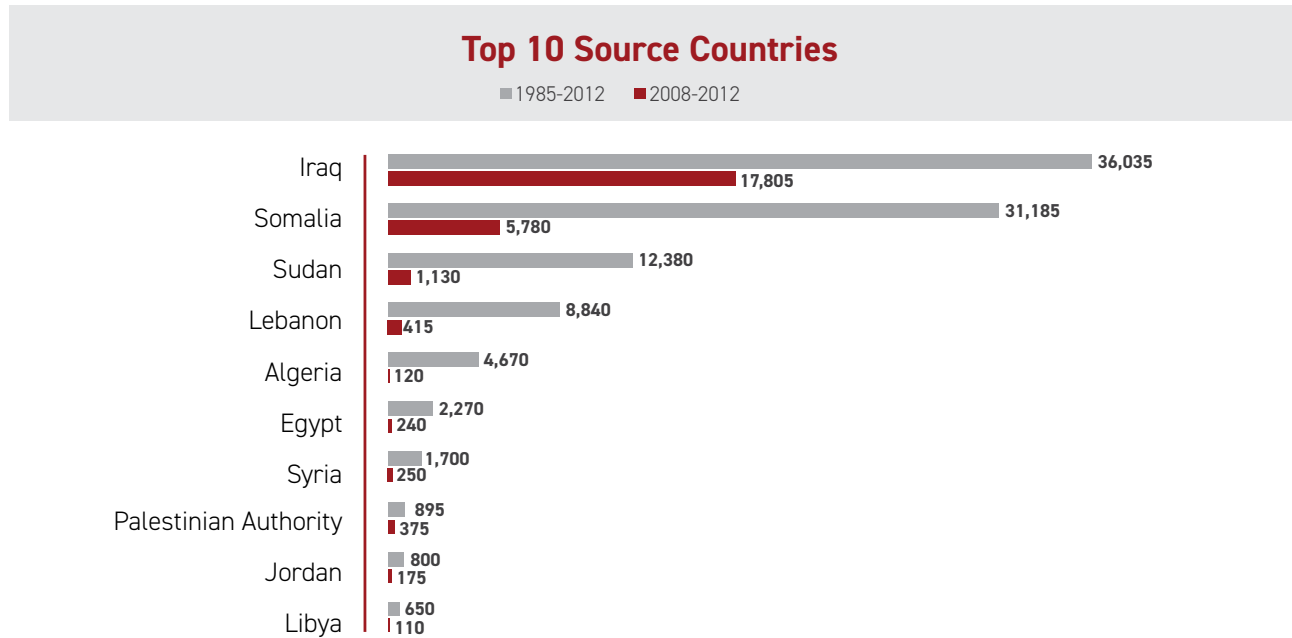
With slightly over 36 thousand refugees landing between 1985 and 2012, Iraq is the largest source country of Arab refugees to Canada, with most arriving following the outbreak of the 2003 Second Gulf War.

Somalia represents the second largest source country of Arab refugees, with Canada admitting an average of 3,400 Somali refugees per year from 1991 to 1993 with the escalation of Somalia's civil war. From 1994 to 2012, Canada has admitted an average of slightly over 1,000 Somali refugees per year.

At about 500 refugees admitted per year between 1985 and 2012, Canada's intake of Sudanese asylum seekers has been low with the one exception being from 2002 to 2005, when Canada admitted about 1,360 Sudanese refugees per year, as Sudan was nearing the end of its decades-long civil war.

Most Lebanese refugees arrived in Canada in the two years marking the end of its civil war, with nearly 5,000 arriving between 1991 and 1992. Since then, Canada has admitted about 160 Lebanese refugees annually.

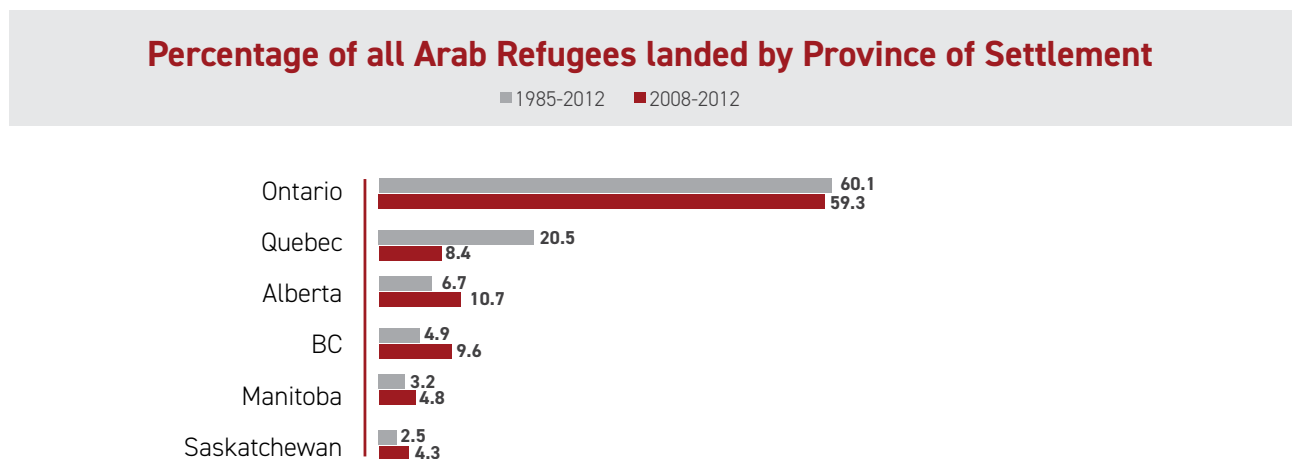
During Algeria's civil war (1991 to 2002), Canada accepted about 4,115 Algerian refugees with the greatest influx arriving between 1996 and 2000. In those five years, about 3,300 Algerian refugees were admitted into Canada.



In recent years, the overwhelming majority of Arab refugees have come from Iraq. In the five years between 2008 and 2012, Iraqi refugees represented about 66% of the total number of Arab refugees admitted to Canada, followed by Somalia (21%) and Sudan (4%).

Province of Settlement

Of the 102,470 Arab refugees accepted into Canada between 1985 and 2012, most chose to settle in Ontario (60%), followed by Quebec (17.3%), Alberta (7.7%) and British Columbia (6.2%). Though analysis of data between 2008 to 2012 shows Ontario's intake has steadily remained at about 60%, Quebec's intake has declined with Alberta and British Columbia surpassing it.



The decline in Arab refugee settlement in Quebec can likely be explained by two main factors. The first is the decline of Arab refugees originating from countries with large French-speaking populations, namely Algeria and Lebanon, who chose to settle in Quebec. The second likely explanation is that the economic rise of the western provinces has attracted incoming refugees away from Quebec. This assumption is supported by the fact that the likes of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia have all attracted a higher percentage of Arab refugees in the years between 2008 and 2012 than they have between 1985 and 2007.

More to come

Not yet publicly available, refugee data from 2013 and onward will likely show some changes in Arab refugee arrival trends in Canada. Specifically, the Syrian civil war and the political instability in Egypt are expected to have resulted in an increase in refugee claimants from the two countries. CAI will continue to provide updated analyses in the years to come.