

## Canada Doubles Its Afghan Refugee Resettlement Target to 40,000 People

The official announcement was made by Canada's foreign minister on Monday evening, speaking at the United Nations General Assembly.

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Canada has doubled to 40,000 the number of Afghans fleeing the Taliban that it plans to take in, the Canadian foreign minister said Monday, fulfilling a campaign pledge made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The announcement, which came a week after Mr. Trudeau's party won re-election, was certain to be welcomed by humanitarian groups in Canada. They had been pressing the government to do significantly more when it initially committed last month to take in 20,000 refugees after the Taliban swept into power.

With the Taliban's harsh interpretation of Islamic law and their repression of women, many Afghans have been hoping to leave the country, and members of Mr. Trudeau's cabinet had said during the campaign that they would raise the number of refugees they would accept beyond the original 20,000 figure.

But the announcement Monday by Marc Garneau, the foreign minister, as he was addressing the annual General Assembly at the United Nations, was the first official word of the expansion.

The doubling will put the Afghan effort on the same level as the Syrian resettlement program that marked Mr. Trudeau's first year in office. It brought in 39,636 refugees from November 2015 to the end of the following year.

Mr. Garneau noted Canada's resettlement of the Syrians in announcing its Afghanistan plan on the podium of the General Assembly in New York.

"Now, faced with a heart-wrenching situation in Afghanistan, Canadians have once again shown their openness to those who do not wish to live under Taliban rule but prefer to stand up for democracy, human rights and gender equality," he said.

"In fact, Canadians overwhelmingly called on us to do more," he said. "And in response to their generosity and welcoming spirit, we have now committed to welcoming 40,000 Afghan refugees to Canada — so that they too can contribute to our success, while we continue to support their efforts for a more peaceful, tolerant world."

As was the case earlier with Syrian refugees, groups of individual Canadians will be able to privately sponsor Afghans looking to come to the country and be responsible for their resettlement.

Marco Mendicino, the immigration minister, said in an interview that Canada has established overland routes to evacuate Afghans to neighboring countries.

"It is essential that we continue to ensure that the Taliban respect the right of safe passage so that as many Afghans who wish to leave are able to do so," Mr. Mendicino said. He added that the expanded resettlement effort will focus on women, girls, L.G.B.T. Afghans, and people belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, which have been targeted by the Taliban in the past.

Mr. Garneau also used the diplomatic world's biggest stage to criticize China over its treatment of two Canadian citizens seized on nebulous charges after Canada detained Meng Wanzhou, a top executive of the Chinese technology giant Huawei, on an extradition request by the United States nearly three years ago. Ms. Meng was released Friday, and China freed the two Canadians, Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig.

"Canada observed the rule of law, and two Canadian citizens paid a heavy price for this commitment," Mr. Garneau said. "We continue to oppose the way these two fine people were treated."

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