

## Example of failed leadership on illegal border crossers

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We, as Canadians, are proud of the fact that we are a welcoming country to newcomers. We embrace multiculturalism and recognize that immigration has played an important role in shaping the country we know and love today. We also have an immigration system that is supposed to be based on compassion and due process to ensure newcomers to Canada are treated fairly while at the same time, our borders remain secure. Unfortunately, since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted #welcometoCanada last year, over 20,000 asylum seekers have illegally crossed into Canada. This situation has created immense stress on Canada's immigration system and increasing costs.

The Prime Minister and the current Liberal government have failed to demonstrate leadership on this matter and show no signs of addressing it in the near future.

It's now been more than 15 months since Prime Minister Trudeau sent out his reckless tweet. Now, as the summer approaches, it's expected that upwards of 400 individuals per day will cross through unofficial entry points over the next few months. Under the Safe Third Country Agreement, those seeking asylum must do so in the country where they first arrived. This prohibits people coming from the United States from seeking asylum at an official port of entry in Canada. However, this does not apply when people cross at an unofficial entry points.

The current Liberal government hasn't closed the loophole of the Safe Third Country Agreement and instead has carried on with their band-aid approach to the issue. They announced they would be prioritizing work permits for illegal border crossers over those who entered the country legally. In addition, they also plan to send immigration officers to Nigeria to help process U.S. visas. Such actions wouldn't be necessary if the current government would listen to the Conservative Official Opposition and close the loophole in the Safe Third Country Agreement.

Canadians expect our immigration system to be compassionate and fair.

However, the actions of the current Liberal government have not reflected these values. What is not compassionate and what is not fair is when individuals are forced to live in homeless shelters, tent cities, and makeshift refugee camps because the Prime Minister has compromised the integrity of the our immigration system. Prime Minister Trudeau's failure to manage a planned immigration system has resulted in social services across several provinces and cities being stretched to their breaking point.

The Prime Minister should be ensuring that when the world's most vulnerable come to Canada, they are given access to the resources and resettlement services necessary to successfully integrate into our social and economic fabric. However, he's instead had to spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on band-aid solutions to deal with his inability to manage Canada's immigration system. Furthermore, by reallocating immigration officers to process illegal crossers, Prime Minister Trudeau is forcing families to wait longer for reunification and thousands of privately sponsored refugees to languish in UNHCR camps. This is not fair.

We, the Official Opposition, will continue to advocate for a compassionate and fair immigration system, hold Prime Minister Trudeau accountable, and call for the Safe Third Country loophole to be closed by designating the entire Canada-U.S. border as an official port of entry.