



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

CIMM • NUMBER 136 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, November 29, 2018

—
Chair

Mr. Robert Oliphant

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Thursday, November 29, 2018

• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.)): I call to order this 136th meeting of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

Good afternoon. Conforming to Standing Order 108(2), we will continue our study of migration challenges and opportunities for Canada in the 21st century, particularly today focusing again on the global compacts that are under discussion.

With apologies to the witnesses, just before you begin I'm going to take a few minutes with the committee to remind them of a few issues about the Standing Orders of the House that I just want to draw your attention to following our meeting on Tuesday. I'll be quoting some lengthy portions of the rules for the committee's consideration. I'm quoting:

The Chair is a key figure on any committee. Chairs are so important that, when a committee does not have one, it is not considered properly constituted. It can undertake no work or other activities, and cannot exercise any of its powers.

Committee Chairs have procedural, administrative and representative responsibilities. Chairs preside over committee meetings and oversee committee work. They recognize the Members, the witnesses and other people who wish to speak at these meetings; as in the House, all remarks are to be addressed to the Chair. They ensure that any rules established by the committee, including those on the apportioning of speaking time, are respected. They are responsible for maintaining order and decorum in committee proceedings, and rule on any procedural matter that arises that are subject to an appeal to the committee.

With respect to disorder and misconduct:

Disorder and misconduct in a committee may arise as a result of the failure to abide by the rules and practices of a committee or to respect the authority of the Chair. Disorder and misconduct also include the use of unparliamentary language, failure to yield the floor or persistent interruption of the proceedings in any manner. However, neither committees nor their Chairs have the authority to censure an act of disorder or misconduct. If a committee desires that specific sanctions be taken against those disrupting the proceedings, it must report the situation to the House. The House may then take such measures as it deems appropriate.

In the event of disorder, the Chair may suspend the meeting until order can be restored or, if the situation is considered to be so serious as to prevent the committee from continuing with its work, the meeting may be adjourned.

That's at the chair's discretion.

In addition, the Chair may, at his or her discretion, interrupt a member whose observations and questions are repetitive or are unrelated to the matter before the committee. If a member in question persists in making repetitive or off-topic comments, the Chair can give the floor to another member. If the member refuses to yield the floor and continues talking, the Chair may suspend or adjourn the meeting.

With respect to repetition and relevance in debate:

The rules of relevance and repetition are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. The requirement that speeches remain relevant to the question before the House

—and this is the committee as well—

flows from the latter's right to reach decisions without undue obstruction and to exclude from debate any discussion not conducive to that end. The rule against repetition helps to ensure the expeditious conduct of debate by prohibiting the repetition of arguments already made. To neglect either rule would seriously impair the ability of the House to manage its times efficiently.

Notwithstanding their importance, these rules remain difficult to define and enforce

and are subjective to the members and particularly to the chair at any give time.

I wanted to remind the committee of that. If, during these proceedings of our committee, I sense that decorum is failing, I am going to take the opportunity to read this statement again, and the clock will remain running while the member's time is on, and you can either use your time to question the witnesses or to listen to me and my discussion about decorum. That will be your choice. Thank you.

Now we're going to begin with our witnesses. Mr. Beuze from the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees of the United Nations, welcome. We're going to begin with testimony from you and then Mr. Damian Smith afterwards.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze (Representative in Canada, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and honourable members. I'm very pleased to be here today for an important topic for my organization, the UN refugee agency, which is the global compact on refugees.

I had the pleasure to be here not so long ago when I gave an overview of the situation of refugees globally. The compact really tries to change the way we do business when we respond to those mass influxes of refugees, mainly in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and perhaps now in Latin America. Let me remind everyone that 60% of the refugees are hosted in just 10 countries. Turkey, Pakistan and Uganda are on the front line with six million refugees altogether.

The compact is really to see how we can use the good practices and lessons learned of more than 60 years of humanitarian and protection response to help those countries shoulder the weight of receiving, hosting, protecting and assisting those refugees.

We shared with the committee a brief last week that I'm sure is in front of everyone, so I will not go back to the explanation of what the compact is and how the compact is going to change the way we do our responses with our partners, but rather address directly issues that have been raised during the debate on those issues by this committee over the last three or four sessions.

Canada's obligation with respect to refugees derives from the 1951 convention, most of which is international customary law anyway, so whether Canada was party or not to the convention, all member states of the United Nations are bound by certain rules, certain obligations in terms of protecting refugees—in particular, the obligation not to return someone to a country where he or she may be at risk of torture or at risk for his or her life.

The obligation of Canada derives also from the UN charter, which calls upon member states to co-operate with one another in solving issues that affect peace and security, in development, but also in humanitarian response. It's in this respect that we have to put the context of the global compact on migration when it calls for responsibility-sharing with those front-line countries that I mentioned. Those front-line countries will rather qualify as burden-sharing because they feel the weight of receiving and having to deliver services for all those refugees.

Obligations exist for Canada, like any other member state, under international instruments such as the 1951 convention or the UN charter.

With respect to the issue of internally displaced persons, IDPs, those persons are governed by human rights instruments and international humanitarian law when they are in a conflict situation. You know that this year we are celebrating the twentieth year of the guiding principles on international displacement, which combine all the rules and rights and obligations of states vis-à-vis those persons who are displaced within their own country. Those are not included in the global compact on refugees because there was a decision by member states at this time of the discussion to focus on the situation of refugees.

In terms of obligations of Canada or any other of the 35 countries that have resettlement programs in terms of the commitment to resettlement and offering durable solutions, this remains a sovereign decision of any of those 35 countries, including Canada. However, the criteria by which the UNHCR in particular, with the support of NGOs and UN partners, identifies the most vulnerable for resettlement have been agreed upon by those 35 countries, including Canada, and those are the global resettlement criteria.

It's not because we are calling upon other actors such as the World Bank, the regional development banks, to come to the fore of the response as well as the private sector, faith-based organizations, cities, that we will not need significant funding for our operation. Again, it's a sovereign decision of Canada and other countries to decide the level of funding that they will dedicate to our response globally.

• (1535)

Let me mention that 87% of our budget is drawn from voluntary contributions from states, and 60% of our budget comes from three

countries: the United States of America, Germany and—not a country—the European Union.

Finally, I want to clarify before the committee the situation vis-à-vis the U.S. and its position vis-à-vis the global compact on refugees.

At the Third Committee a few weeks ago, the U.S. delegation expressed full support for most of what is included in the global compact on refugees. It reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to the objective of the compact. It actually asked other countries—I would imagine that this included Canada—to help in supporting financially and through durable solutions those front-line countries that are addressed in the global compact on refugees, and to increase the space for resettlement because, as you know, the U.S. is number one in terms of free settlement space, as well as in financial contribution to the response to the refugee crisis. It also expressed strong support to UNHCR, but had some reservations, for example, on the issue of detention of asylum seekers, which is not any more an issue in Canada since Minister Goodale enacted the alternative to detention as part of the immigration-related processes.

The participation of Canada in holding those discussions has been really at the forefront through representation in Geneva, but also very much through consultation from the NGOs. I know that you received in front of this committee a number of NGOs that were able to testify to their having been fully consulted on the way that, collectively, we can see how to do better in helping those front-line countries in sub-Saharan Africa, in the Middle East, in Asia and, these days, in Central America to help them address the protection needs and the services that those refugees require.

Thank you very much.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith (Associate Director, Global Migration Lab, As an Individual): My name is Craig Damian Smith. I'm the associate director of the Global Migration Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto.

I just want to thank you and say it's a privilege to be part of this discussion.

I want to open by stating that the conversation comes at a pivotal moment for what we call “global migration governance”. It's a time when the international humanitarian system, multilateral institutions and the rules-based international order are increasingly under strain and even under threat by some member states. The global compact on refugees can help reinvigorate the norms, laws and institutions that make up the international refugee regime.

Canada can play a strong leadership role, but unfortunately, at the moment it seems that our role is mostly rhetorical. It's time to stop resting on our laurels. Concretely, this means a serious and sustained effort to increase our official development assistance and dismantle some of the silos between and within the federal government in order to deliberate effectively. I'll return to that point in a moment.

The committee has heard from leading experts and practitioners. I'm assuming that you know the state of affairs. You know that the New York declaration of 2016 was endorsed by all UN member states, that Canada played a leading role in developing both of the compacts, and that they reflect the balance of interests between hosts and donor states. Now it's time to do the actual work.

I want to reiterate a few basic facts about why we need the global compact on refugees and what Canada can do.

First, the international humanitarian system is failing. The current financial and political commitments cannot meet the needs of displaced people or of the states that host them. Second, the burden for dealing with displaced people disproportionately falls on poorer, more fragile states.

To date, the international community has focused on what we call a "care and maintenance" approach for dealing with displaced people. That entails short-term humanitarian funding to try to meet people's basic needs while they look for a durable solution to their displacement. We know that the international community recognizes three durable solutions to people's refugee status: return to countries of origin, naturalization in their host states, or third country resettlement internationally.

The refugee regime wasn't designed for the current displacement dynamics. Most people can't return home, and only a tiny fraction are resettled internationally every year. The effect of that is increasingly protracted refugee situations.

Protracted refugee populations and protracted humanitarian aid can distort host state labour and housing markets, strain resources, upset political and ethnic balances, and foster animosity with host communities. Host states are understandably reluctant to use international development assistance for refugees. Weak solidarity from donor states means that they have little incentive to naturalize or integrate refugees.

These protracted refugee situations and funding shortfalls have given rise to a growing phenomenon of what we call "irregular secondary movement". That's when, rather than stagnating in host countries and waiting for a chance at international resettlement that's very likely not going to come, refugees decide to pay human smugglers to try to make it to a safe country where they and their families might have some kind of future.

The fact that migrants and refugees share the same irregular migration system—so they are what we call "complex mixed flows"—is one of the sources of anti-refugee sentiment in liberal democracies, where everyone claiming asylum is immediately suspected of being a mere economic migrant or a queue-jumper. It seems to not matter that no queue actually exists, that the migrant-refugee distinctions are often blurry at best, that global north states see an infinitesimal proportion of refugees globally, and that we have the resources to properly scale our asylum systems. Unfortunately, scapegoating refugees and whipping up fear about public safety is a well-worn tactic for electoral gain.

At the same time, the states that built the refugee regime are abandoning the pretense of rights and due process by offshoring migration controls to authoritarian states, militarizing borders and

cutting social assistance to make their countries less favourable destinations.

Effective international burden-sharing can help forestall this race to the bottom. Not coincidentally, that's the basic premise of the global compact on refugees.

● (1545)

The main mechanism for this burden-sharing, the one I want to talk about, is the comprehensive refugee response framework, or the CRRF. The CRRF calls for new and additional international contributions at the nexus of humanitarian and development aid, or as they called it at the World Humanitarian Summit, the new way of working.

The main goal of linking humanitarian and development programming through the CRRF is to foster the inclusion and self-reliance of displaced people and to concurrently relieve the burden on host states. It's as much a forward-looking way of dealing with displaced people as it is a political recognition that most of them are not going to go home or be resettled.

The Chair: I'll just ask the witness to slow down one notch for the interpreter. I'll give you a little extra time for their benefit, not yours.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: Sure. Thank you. I'm used to just talking as much as I want and forcing students to listen.

While Canada helped draft the global compact on refugees, our support for the CRRF seems remarkably less clear. The fact is that if you look at where our programming is right now, we're simply rebranding existing development and humanitarian programming and calling it a root-causes approach to irregular migration and refugee situations. It's just old money with new labels.

I had the chance to conduct a study this year on the CRRF for Global Affairs Canada, specifically looking at it in the Central American context, where it's a regional mechanism called MIRPS. That study found three main impediments to real solidarity and burden-sharing for the CRRF from Canada.

The first is that the timelines for humanitarian and development programming and the funding cycles are very different.

Second, despite the amalgamation of CIDA and DFAIT, programming at GAC remains functionally siloed between humanitarian and development work.

Last and maybe most important, we're not spending enough money. Canada's ODA is quite paltry, to be honest. The recent budget called for 0.26% of the gross national income over the next years. Against inflation, that's actually a real decline. It's also a decrease from the 0.31% since the last 2012 OECD review. This current government is spending less money on ODA than the previous government.

I've had several conversations with people at Global Affairs and IRCC about the situation. The situation is basically that the old CIDA people and the humanitarian people don't work together on programming. Regional offices within GAC don't communicate thematically. Global Affairs and IRCC work in parallel on the same issues when they should be complementary. That's also the issue with the CRRF.

The public service is waiting for a champion with the political capital to provide direction on work at the humanitarian development nexus, to support the CRRF. Of course the situation is complicated—bureaucratic path dependency and financing constraints are real—but it's far from impossible.

Canada's civil service, academic institutions and civil society organizations have a wealth of expertise in all of these areas. Together we can readily identify pilot projects with clear outcome metrics for displaced people in CRRF countries, leverage international development financing, mobilize existing resources to incentivize host state co-operation, and offer complementary pathways for resettlement and labour migration to relieve the most pressing burdens on host states.

Just to close, in my opinion the discussion about whether we should sign onto the compacts or how they affect our sovereignty misses the point entirely: It's not whether we should do this stuff, but how we equitably share the burden moving forward.

Thank you.

● (1550)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll begin with Ms. Zahid.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to both the witnesses for coming and, Mr. Beuze, for coming back again.

I want to spend some time with you to address some of the charges and fears about the compacts that we hear levelled by opponents.

First, these compacts on non-binding, correct?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: You're correct, but it's a political commitment. Therefore, we expect all the member states to deliver results against the commitment, which has been agreed upon between the host countries and countries like Canada, which are more in the funding seat.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: We'll go from there. I would like to quote one of the concerns that have been raised: "The United Nations could ask Canada to change its policy because of the global compact on refugees".

Does the UN not already lobby Canada on its refugee policy in the absence of any non-binding compacts?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: The UN is a collection of 193 members states, one of them being Canada, so we are at the service of the 193 member states, but obviously we do advocate for the policies to be aligned to the international agreement, whether they are legally binding or a political commitment.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Does that mean, then, that signing these compacts will not change the situation in that case?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: Let me repeat that there is no signing of the compact. It's going to be as part of the omnibus resolution of the High Commissioner for Refugees' resolution to the General Assembly, which will affirm the 193 members states are affirming the valued added of the compact as a vision, a tool, a road map, to help those countries in the front line of the refugee response and to better share the responsibility, financially and otherwise.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Will the non-binding compact change the UN's ability to lobby Canada on the refugee policy, and also Canada's ability to make its sovereign policy decisions?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: Every member state remains a sovereign decision-maker as far as those matters are concerned, but there is an expectation of co-operation among member states.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Does the UN or the UNHCR have any plans to assign rapporteurs to "disparage" Canada or question its sovereign policies if we are not in line with the compact?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: No. A mechanism in the global compact is called the global forum. It is held every four years at the ministerial level, when all countries come together to renew their political commitment in funding, resettlement levels, helping, getting more active, whether it's the private sector or development institutions or international financial institutions. It's a peer mechanism among member states.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Thank you for clarifying that.

I think we all agree that we should or want to reduce migration, whether it is forced or driven by economic necessity. I think we can all agree that irregular, unplanned migration across national borders is not desirable. With these assumptions, does it make sense to you that some would choose to abandon working multilaterally with the global community to address irregular migration and its root causes in a coordinated way, and instead try to do it alone or all by yourself from the world? German Chancellor Angela Merkel, addressing their parliament last week, called it "nationalism in its purest form".

● (1555)

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: Professor Smith has already alluded to this response, and I'm happy to offer him the floor.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: Thank you.

It's a fact that when states make unilateral decisions about irregular migration and how they're going to react to irregular migration, it necessarily affects other states and their neighbours, and there are cascading effects. The best and the only real way to deal with it proactively in a way that conforms to what states have agreed to for protecting the human rights and rights of all people as refugees and migrants is a system of collective action to address root causes of irregular migration. Unilateral policies have very pernicious effects on neighbours and migrants alike.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Beuze, what sort of input has Canada given the UNHCR regarding the kind of cases it would like to see referred regarding the vulnerable populations?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: We are in close dialogue with IRCC—Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada—which is our partner in the resettlement, especially when it comes to government-assisted resettlement or the blended visa program for refugees who are resettled in Canada. As I briefly mentioned, the global criteria of resettlement have been agreed upon by 35 members states, including Canada, and there is an objective assessment of the most vulnerable refugees whose survival is at risk in the first country where they found asylum.

Let me clarify that Canada decides the level of resettlement. Every year the minister of IRCC comes before Parliament to submit the immigration levels, and as part of the immigration levels they say those who will be admitted to the country on humanitarian grounds. Then there's a discussion between the IRCC and the UNHCR on where those refugees should be coming from. We provide IRCC with a map of where the most vulnerable refugees are. As we speak, we have identified 1.4 million out of the 25 million refugees who need resettlement as survivors—not for a better life, but as survivors—and Canada will resettle 10,000 this year through the government and UNHCR.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Do I have time, Chair?

The Chair: You are done. Thank you.

Mr. Tilson is next.

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will continue on the line of questioning of Mrs. Zahid, on the issue of the compacts being non-binding.

I'd like to make a comparison to see if you agree whether or not there is a comparison to the Paris Agreement on climate change. My view is that there was an agreement on how to deal with climate change, and terms were set out, proposals for each member state to agree to do certain things. The agreement is non-binding. I expect that if a member state changed its mind, there would be some difficulty with the other member states, or the organization of them.

You have answered Mrs. Zahid's questions by saying that it is non-binding and that it's not going to affect the sovereignty, and other things, of Canada. My question is this: What if Canada decides not to follow the recommendations that are being made under the compact? What might happen?

• (1600)

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: As in any international forum, it's a question of a good relationship with the other member states that are, on their side, abiding by the political commitment that has been reflected in the compact.

Let's not confuse things here: The compact doesn't have clear-cut, measurable recommendations against which Canada will be able to be assessed in an objective manner. It's a commitment to the front-line countries to say, "You are receiving 85%-90% of the refugees; we are not. You are often in a situation where you have difficulties financially in developing your own countries for your own citizens." Those citizens are the ones receiving this extra demographic pressure of refugees. This agreement just reflects good partnership at the level of international relations.

Mr. David Tilson: I understand. I guess I'm looking at the fact that currently the Liberal Party is the government in Canada, but there are three major parties in this country: the New Democratic Party, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. One or other of the parties may come to office, may not agree with what the former government was doing and may challenge what is being done under the compact. My question to you is this: What might happen if that took place? Would there be pressure? Would there be aspersions cast on a new government to perhaps pressure it to follow along the lines of the previous government?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: There are two things. There will certainly be advocacy on the part of my organization to call for Canada to do more for refugees, whether it's in terms of the resettlement level or the funding level. As was mentioned before, I think we should not lose track of how, over the years, Canada has been a strong partner. We are asking for more, but it has been a strong partner of my organization and of countries that are receiving refugees, whether you look at, as mentioned by Mr. Smith, the funding level or at resettlement levels, based on referrals by UNHCR, for the previous government or this government.

I'm sorry to make this comment, and allow me to.... It may be a bit of a rhetorical question that you're asking, because in the past 60 years, Canada has always been supportive of other countries when it comes to delivering humanitarian and development aid.

Mr. David Tilson: I understand that. All three parties will agree with that, but they may not agree with philosophical statements that have come forward.

Mr. Smith, you made some derogatory comments about the current government not spending as much money as previous governments have spent, and you made some comments generally about the government. I guess I tie that into the issue of the fact that this is a non-binding agreement. My question is about the pressure on a government to change where they're going from what went before.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: Is your question whether or not the government feels pressure or that they should feel pressure?

Mr. David Tilson: My question is...if we enter into this non-binding agreement, I suggest to you that it's a binding agreement.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: I think that if we leave considerations of political affiliation aside and just look at—

Mr. David Tilson: They do change from time to time.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: They do change from time to time, but the one constant in international relations is the sovereign self-interest of states.

If we consider well-regulated and well-managed international mobility in such a way so that you don't see large-scale irregular migration flows on borders that can do things like potentially undermine the entirety of something like the European project through the EU or create violent domestic backlashes from white nationalists against asylum seekers, then it's definitely in states' self-interest to co-operate. It's also cheaper to co-operate with other states in the international system.

•(1605)

Mr. David Tilson: One of you mentioned that the United States was in support of the compacts. My understanding was that the United States was not in support of the compacts because of the issue of sovereignty, as is the case with Australia, Israel I believe, Bulgaria and several others.

In other words, you've contradicted what I've been led to believe about the United States, and I don't know what you meant by that. However, on the issue of sovereignty—and this is to either one of you—there's a fairly large number of member states that are not going to participate in the compacts. What's the effect of that on the overall philosophy of these compacts?

The Chair: I'm afraid that the member's come to the end of his time. However, I think it's an important question, so I'm going to pretend I don't see the clock because I think the two compacts may need to be separated on that issue.

If you'd like to take some time to explain and answer the question, it would be helpful.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: Briefly, the United States did not participate in the consultation leading to the adoption of the global compact for migration, which is the one that will be formally adopted in Marrakesh in 10 days.

The United States delegation in Geneva, and later on in New York, has participated in the consultation on the global compact on refugees. When it came to the Third Committee of the General Assembly—which is a subcommittee similar to your committee—just before the resolution has to be adopted by the General Assembly, the U.S. delegation affirmed support for most of the contents of the global compact. They also reaffirmed support for the UN refugee agency, but decided not to join the consensus on the resolution, which was affirming the global compact on refugees. They did this not for the reason of sovereignty—I'm sorry; I should not interpret the U.S. delegation—but they flagged in particular that one of the recommendations of the compact is that asylum seekers should benefit from alternatives to detention, which is not in line with the current policies of the U.S. administration, as you know.

The Chair: Could you reply very briefly?

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: As a political scientist, I'd say that the entire purpose of these states pulling out or saying that they won't support the global compact on migration is domestic political gain, and the audience there is the domestic audience.

You're talking about Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland. These are the countries that belong to the Visegrad group of states, which is a group of states in central and eastern Europe that have a stated objective of undermining multilateral institutions—

Mr. David Tilson: Not Australia.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: —based on anti-Semitic tropes about who controls multilateral institutions.

Mr. David Tilson: Australia doesn't agree with that, though.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: Australia is a pioneer of a policy that was first called the “white Australia policy”, which then became known as the “Pacific solution”, which was to excise their territory from the refugee convention so that they could indefinitely warehouse refugees on small islands.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: Detain.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: Detain.

The Chair: I think I need to end you there. I know you could go on, but we'll read your paper.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: It's not a group of states that we want to align ourselves with, in my opinion.

The Chair: Don't forget Bulgaria.

Go ahead, Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses.

Professor Smith, I'm wondering what your opinion is in this situation. Does firing tear gas across a border into a sovereign territory of another country to prevent would-be asylum seekers or claimants from reaching a border constitute respecting human rights? Is that consistent with the goals and principles of the compact?

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: The practice of shooting tear gas across borders and pushing people back from claiming asylum is unfortunately part of a growing trend in border control that some states—Israel and Hungary, for instance—call “hot returns”, which is to push people back over borders regardless of whether or not there is a safe third country agreement with the previous transit state. Some people call it push-back policies.

The basic answer is no, it's not in line with any norm that we would consider.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: That's totally right in terms of the norm, but the compact does not address those situations. The compact addresses the situation of the front-line countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Asia and down south in Central America, which do not necessarily have the financial means, the services, the refugee status determination procedures in place to support, on their own, the response to a mass arrival of refugees such as we have seen with the Rohingya, the South Sudanese or the Syrians.

The compact does not address the situations that you are referring to.

•(1610)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Right. I understand that. Because of the geography, because of the principle behind the compact, from what I understand....

I just wanted to be clear, because in those circumstances, irrespective of the geography, if you were to apply the principles of the compact throughout the globe no matter where the asylum seekers might be, those kinds of practices would not be consistent with the compact. That's what I'm trying to get an understanding of, and that's the answer I—

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: And with the 1951 convention, which is, as I mentioned earlier, not only a legally binding instrument on states party to the convention but which also contains customary international law by which asylum seekers should be entitled to the protection of the state where the claimants are known. That's correct.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much. In fact, I was trying to get that answer to see whether or not a country that engages in that kind of practice is acting consistently with the 1951 convention. Thank you for that answer, because I couldn't quite actually get that answer from our own officials with IRCC.

Professor Smith, as you mentioned in your comments, irregular migrants impact other states, because clearly there is an implication. However, because the compact is geographically located and targets a different set of community members, in the situation in the United States, which is not part of the compact, we have asylum seekers trying to get to safety and unable to do so because tear gas is being thrown at them. The U.S. has made a declaration that those who are fleeing domestic violence or gang violence would not be able to make an asylum claim, and there's the latest with the LGBTQ community in terms of identity.

Given that this is the environment, how would you suggest the international community deal with that? Will there be a provision or an attempt through the international community to address this situation, whether it's through the compact or otherwise?

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: I still think we're moving between the GCR and the GCM—the two compacts—a bit in the way that we're discussing this.

If Canada wants to do something about the situation on the border with Mexico and the U.S., the provisions in the compact that allow them to do that are to address the displacement situation in Central America through the regional MIRPS process.

I can send you the report that I wrote for Global Affairs Canada about this. The level of violence and ecological degradation and other push factors in the northern triangle of Central American countries is quite profound and requires a sustained and massive increase in international assistance if we want to forestall the types of irregular migration crises that give rise to this type of behaviour on the border.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I would appreciate it if you can send that to the committee. I think every member in this committee could benefit from it.

I wonder if there's anything else to add from you, Mr. Beuze.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: As you know, the state of affairs in international relations means that there's no international police. There is a security council here that is the ultimate decision-making body that can decide when there is an infringement on peace and security under chapter 7 by one of the member states. Otherwise, it's just good relationships between neighbours, as was well explained by Professor Smith. Therefore, it's the responsibility of each member of the international community to try to hold each other accountable when one country does not seem to be able or willing to abide by the norms of the 1951 convention, or any other norm, and to help and support them through advocacy, technical support, funding, and so on and so forth.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

There are those who argue that Canada should not be part of the compact. In fact, I just got a couple of emails from my own constituents saying, "This is very dangerous. It's really bad for

Canada. Please, please, please make sure that we are not part of that."

To those who make those comments, what would you say?

• (1615)

The Chair: Say it very briefly.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: I'd reiterate what I said: that a world of well-governed and well-managed migration is in every state's interest and that it meets basic criteria of upholding and protecting vulnerable people's rights.

The Chair: You have 10 seconds.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: To add to that, there is a long tradition of Canada supporting the most vulnerable abroad. Canadians should be proud of that.

The Chair: That's it. Thanks.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I just want to clarify on the time question, Mr. Chair. My Conservative colleagues were given extra time, as you've noted. Important questions were asked and extra time was given. That was at your discretion, although not according to the rules that govern this committee. I'm just wondering at what point there will be discretion given to other committee members to have that extension of time.

The Chair: There often is, and if you would like the total number of minutes you've been given discretionarily since I became chair, I have that number.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Well, thank you very much—

The Chair: If you would like that, I'm happy to give that to you.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Yes. More specifically in this committee meeting today, though, that was an explicit provision given. I don't disagree with that, Mr. Chair, but when that is being applied, I think it's fair to say it should apply to all members.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Tabbara is next.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to follow up on what my colleague was saying.

There are those who say that the global compact for migration aims to erase national borders or encourage irregular border crossings, and I think this is dangerous to say. The objectives of this global compact are for "safe, orderly and regular migration". It outlines it in objective 23: "Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration".

I want to turn your attention to objective number 5, "Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration". As we noted in the testimonies, there are eastern European countries that have pulled out of that migration. I think it's dangerous. If we look not too far away from us, kind of in our own backyard, at Mexico, there are smugglers who make up to \$2,000 a day smuggling individuals. They make up to \$200 smuggling a Mexican migrant and up to \$500 for a non-Mexican migrant. An individual working in a factory in Juárez, a border city, makes up to \$5 a day. You can see the discrepancy here.

I think that when states pull out of the global compact for migration, they are essentially creating or fostering this type of human smuggling. It is very dangerous for individuals, because it keeps the most vulnerable individuals in the hands of smugglers. Women and girls can be susceptible to sex trafficking, and this can be very dangerous.

Canada has put a gender lens on its foreign policy to protect the most vulnerable, and that could be women and children. Can you add to that on why states need to get on board with this global compact and ensure that the most vulnerable are protected?

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: It's a very important question, and the dynamics are very important.

I've spent several years working in irregular migration systems, as we call them, in north Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans, and now increasingly in Central America. The very basic fact of irregular migration—why markets exist for smuggling and trafficking—is that prohibition in the face of market demand creates illicit markets. People want to move and people need to move. As you mentioned, there are vast economic discrepancies between states, which act as the kind of push-and-pull factors generally.

When you force people to undertake irregular journeys with increasingly sophisticated and networked criminalized smuggling rings, very often they overlap with trafficking, and people can become trapped on their journeys. Women and girls can be pushed into situations of trafficking. Domestic labour is a major trend, but also forced sex work. It's a big issue that doesn't lend itself well to very simple solutions and policy statements, but the simple fact is the market dynamics that I alluded to.

● (1620)

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Beuze, do you want to comment as well?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: That's one of the issues that overlaps in both contexts, migration and refugees. It's the whole issue of trafficking and smuggling, as well as a few other issues. For the very reason explained by Professor Smith, the concern is that you increase the risk for persons who are already vulnerable, because they are fleeing situations of persecution or conflict, to fall into the hands of criminal organizations, hoping they will be helped to find safety but being trapped into trafficking and sexual and other forms of exploitation and contemporary forms of slavery.

As a result, it's important that we create legal pathways for asylum seekers as well as migrants—but I'm speaking about asylum seekers—for them not to have to resort to those practices.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Thank you.

We also had testimony from our former foreign affairs minister, Lloyd Axworthy. He recommended to the committee and to the Government of Canada to confiscate frozen assets of crooked foreign leaders and use the money for the benefit of the population they have swindled.

Do you agree with taking certain assets from certain rogue states and putting it into resources where we can help asylum seekers and refugees?

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: UNHCR has no position on this issue. IRCC and GAC colleagues have responded that they are going to explore very closely the legal and policy framework that will be required to do so.

What is important for my organization as well as all the NGOs is that whether or not this works, we need additional funding to deliver the services that are required on the ground to protect and assist refugees.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: Canada should focus on the comprehensive refugee response framework as it's been negotiated painstakingly between host and donor states.

Very briefly, and somewhat politically on this idea, Canada will run squarely into Europe's interests on migration controls if you try to take money from authoritarian states to pay for asylum seekers. I can point specifically to the Sudanese government, which has paid several hundreds of millions of euros per year to control migration through their country—

The Chair: I'm afraid I need to end you there. Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Ms. Boucher, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm new to this committee. I'm acting as a replacement today.

I had already heard about this compact, because I keep an eye on the international issues as well.

I would like an explanation. I just saw that, barely three hours ago, another country refused to sign the compact. This country joins a long list of countries that refuse to sign the compact because they find it too restrictive.

Why are so many countries refusing to sign the compact? In that case, why should Canada sign it? From what I've read, a large number of countries are refusing to sign the compact. I would like an explanation for their refusal to sign it. Why should Canada sign a compact that more and more other countries are refusing to sign?

● (1625)

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: You're referring to the global compact for migration and not the global compact on refugees. Is that correct?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: It's not up to the UNHCR to answer this question. It's up to the International Organization for Migration, and you were joined by a representative from that organization here last week.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Okay.

[English]

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: If I might respond in English—

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes. I have no problem with that.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: As I mentioned earlier, it's 10 countries approximately, but on the domestic politics in the countries under question, again, look at Viktor Orban's Hungary. Look at Austria right now. Look at the government and rule of law in Poland. These are places where xenophobic, right-wing, anti-UN sentiment gets votes. That's the whole answer, in my opinion.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Maguire is next.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair and my colleagues.

Thank you, Mr. Smith. I appreciate that frankness, and I was going to ask the same question that my colleague did, Mr. Tabbara. I don't know if you answered it in the previous question or not, but it's in regard to our presentation from Mr. Axworthy from the World Refugee Council. They're formed to try to bring countries together to figure out how we can solve these refugee situations and crises that are developing around the world. Obviously you can't relocate everybody; we have to figure out a way to make sure that we can get them back on their own turf, on their own ground. Those were the first couple of things that you had for timelines, Mr. Beuze, as well.

On confiscating frozen assets, realigning them back into it, Mr. Axworthy had a big article in I believe the Winnipeg Free Press over the weekend, and he had a very clear statement on how to develop that. I wonder if you can see if the World Refugee Council is a body that could be utilized or if there is something else. They're bringing countries together instead of worrying about whether they're signing the compact or not.

It's getting the ones together, as I believe you said, Mr. Smith, that share the burden. It's not whether or not we sign the compact; it's how we get them together, and how does everybody work to make sure that we have an efficient means of being able to relocate these people and deal with the country's problems that they have in their home states.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: Lloyd Axworthy knows a lot more about the dynamics of diplomacy and international politics than I do, obviously. With respect to the work of the World Refugee Council, one of their mandates is to think outside the box about how to address global displacement crises. Again, we have the 1951 refugee convention. We have the 1967 protocols. We have the international refugee regime and UNHCR. The IOM joined the UN system this year. We have, for the first time in a very long time, the makings of a global governance regime for international mobility, which is something that hasn't existed, despite the fact that human mobility is one of the last issue areas that doesn't have a global regime. I think that's where we should focus our attention.

The Chair: That's five minutes. Thank you.

Mr. Whalen, we can have maybe two or three minutes from you.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Okay. We'll have to keep it tight.

I would like to focus on what Mr. Smith mentioned earlier, which is the how. Canada's currently at 0.26% GNI on the ODA, and if we were even just to get to the average, we'd have to add a billion dollars to our assistance. To get to where we're expected to be, we'd have to add about \$7 billion.

If we added a billion, how far would that go in helping address the refugee crisis? If you don't have an idea about where a billion would go, maybe Mr. Beuze does.

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: I'm going to defer.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: Our funding requirement's at \$8 billion. As I mentioned, we are going to receive approximately \$4 billion, so if you were contributing another \$1 billion to the UN refugee agency, you would have a major impact, as you can imagine. Even if it was distributed among different humanitarian partners—Canadian NGOs, international NGOs, local NGOs—it would make a massive difference in the lives of people and therefore protect them against the feeling that they have only one choice, which is to continue their roles through all kinds of means, including irregular means and using trafficking.

● (1630)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Smith, maybe I'll ask the question in a slightly different way. If Canada was living up to its ODA goals, and if other countries were as well—because the OECD average, again, is less than half of what the aspirational commitment is that the U.K. and the Nordic countries meet or exceed—how would that have maybe even prevented these humanitarian refugee crises altogether?

Mr. Craig Damian Smith: I'm very glad that you framed the question that way.

If you look at the proximate triggers and the catalysts for the 2015 migration crisis into Europe, that was because the carrying capacity, or the coverage capacity, of the humanitarian aid to host states in the Middle East decreased so substantially that people had to make the choice to move. That was the catalyst. It wasn't Angela Merkel saying that the doors were open. The timelines don't bear out that analysis at all. That's the answer, and I can share the numbers with you quite readily.

Mr. Nick Whalen: I think that's the key point. ODA is meant to prevent these crises from happening, and I think because it's so underfunded, including by us.... It's great that our economic growth exceeds inflation, which is maybe one of the reasons we haven't hit our campaign's stated targets, but I think it's time that we do. To that extent, I agree with you wholeheartedly.

In terms of the budget for your organization, again, Mr. Beuze, is there an opportunity for Canada to help or encourage other countries also to up their commitments, and what would be required of Canada in order to have the street credibility in order to make our pleas to other countries better received?

The Chair: Please answer very briefly.

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Beuze: The high commissioner came to Canada to say that he counts on the leadership of Canada to be an example for other countries, including in terms of the level of funding dedicated to the response to refugees. Definitely, it makes a difference when we can refer to Canada having increased, for example, its ODA.

The Chair: We need to end this panel there. We're going to take a very brief break to switch panels. Just as a reminder, this next session goes to until 5:15, and then we move in to a business meeting to give drafting instructions to the analysts for the report. We'll pause very briefly to switch around.

● (1630)

(Pause)

● (1635)

The Chair: I'm going to call this meeting back to order to keep going.

We're delighted to have witnesses with us for this continuation of the study of migration challenges and opportunities for Canada in the 21st century and to continue our discussion about the global compacts.

We're going to begin with Professor Clark-Kazak. Thank you for joining us again.

Professor Christina Clark-Kazak (Associate Professor, School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, As an Individual): Thank you very much for having me here again to appear before this committee.

[Translation]

I'll give my presentation in English, but if you have any questions in French, I would be happy to answer them in French.

[English]

I am speaking today in my individual capacity, but I'm also drawing on my experience as editor-in-chief of *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, as well as my role as president of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, IASFM.

The global compact on refugees, or GCR, is a compromise document, but it is likely the best the international community can do in the current political climate. It is also important to note that while the document builds on commitments in the 1951 UN convention on refugees as well as its 1967 protocol, many hosting states are not party to these conventions. Therefore, their commitment to the GCR will be important in establishing international baselines for refugee protection and rights.

I would like to acknowledge Canada's strong leadership throughout the GCR process and Canadian officials' proactive, regular consultations with academics and civil society. Canada is well regarded as a key player in the multilateralism that will likely result in the adoption of the GCR in mid-December. Canada should continue to provide strong support to the GCR, however imperfect, and work to redress some of its shortcomings.

I would like to recommend five areas in which Canada can demonstrate this leadership.

First, I recommend that Canada co-organize the first global refugee forum, which will be held in late 2019 or early 2020. This will be a key meeting to operationalize the GCR. While the timing is challenging, given federal elections next year, I urge bipartisan support for Canada to co-organize the global refugee forum in partnership with a country that hosts large numbers of refugees.

Proactive efforts need to be made to facilitate the participation of people most affected by forced migration, including refugees and host communities. One of the critiques of the GCR process was it did not engage enough with these perspectives. Canadian partnership with host states in the global south could redress these shortcomings through the global refugee forum.

Second, the GCR is a political statement, not a legal document. In this absence of legal accountability mechanisms, there's a need for strong monitoring and evaluation. Unlike the sustainable development goals or the United Nations declaration on human rights, both of which are political documents that have had practical implications, there are no clear indicators in the GCR.

However, the GCR references early warning, and paragraph 43 provides for the establishment of a global academic network. I have just returned from a preliminary workshop in Geneva hosted by UNHCR, and a general consensus at that meeting and of the diverse IASFM membership that I represent is that this network should draw on existing research networks, many of which are led by Canadians. We need to develop GCR-specific indicators and mechanisms for data gathering. These indicators need to be sensitive to age, gender, ability, race and many other axes of difference.

Third, "expand access to third-country solutions" is one of the four GCR objectives. Canada's private sponsorship example is widely cited as one way to do so. The Canadian government and colleagues at uOttawa's Refugee Hub are helping other countries to adopt and adapt sponsorship models in other contexts. This work should continue.

As faculty adviser to the WUSC local committees that sponsor refugee students at both York and uOttawa, I can attest to the power of private sponsorship to change lives, both of sponsors and of refugees. I recommend that the Canadian government maintain the position of additionality, and that these privately sponsored refugees are in addition to continued resettlement of government-assisted refugees.

Fourth, Canada needs to strongly uphold the fundamental rights of people in situations of forced migration, including the right to claim asylum. This is one area in which the GCR falls short. Indeed, the GCR language is too often objectification of refugees. This is exemplified, for example, by the title: "Global Compact on Refugees". It's not a global compact for refugees. People in situations of forced migration are primarily viewed as burdens rather than as human resources. My textual analysis of the GCR shows that refugees are only cited as active agents in 1.6% of the references in the text.

● (1640)

This compares with 41% of references where they are represented as objects and 33% using generic adjectives, such as "refugee protection". Only one of the four GCR objectives is refugee-specific. It cites "refugee self-reliance", rather than thinking more holistically about how refugees contribute to their host societies.

For example, Statistics Canada reports that children of immigrants, including refugees, are more likely to go to university than their Canadian-born counterparts. Many of our leaders, including the current minister of IRCC, colleagues here in Parliament, and past governors general, came to Canada as refugees. Language matters. It has real consequences for public opinion, policy-making and public servants' discretionary decision-making at borders and within the Immigration and Refugee Board, the IRB.

The right to claim asylum predates the UN convention and the creation of Canada as a settler state. For this right to be realized, states need to allow people access to their territories to make a claim. We do not have to approve all of these claims. This is the job of the IRB. In some cases, claims are found to be unfounded and people are sent back, but people need to be able to get here to Canada to exercise this right to claim asylum.

I recommend suspending the safe third country agreement. As Ms. Kwan has already referenced here today, the U.S. is currently using tear gas against unarmed people at its borders. It has deliberately detained children away from their parents as a policy of deterrence. By any measure of safety, the U.S. is clearly not a safe third country. We need to educate average Canadians about our international legal obligations to asylum, as well as our relative place in global displacement.

As I have already mentioned here in this committee, I've worked in the refugee context in Uganda, which is a country that ranks 163rd on the human development index and is tied with Pakistan as the second-largest refugee-hosting state in the world. There in one day, poor communities were receiving the number of refugee claimants that Canada has received in one whole year. The global compact is supposed to redress these global inequities. Our internationally recognized role in the GCR process will ring hollow if we are simultaneously pursuing policies that are preventing people from exercising their right to claim asylum.

Fifth and finally—

The Chair: Okay. I need you to wind up quickly.

Prof. Christina Clark-Kazak: —Canada could take leadership on addressing displacement, which falls outside of the global compacts, including the human caravan, which is a visible manifestation that falls between the global compact on migration and the global compact on refugees.

[Translation]

Thank you.

I can answer the questions in French.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we're going to continue with witnesses from One Free World International.

I don't know who's going to begin, Majed or Adiba.

Mr. Majed El Shafie (Founder and President, One Free World International): I will start.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. You have seven minutes.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, for inviting me. I will be speaking today mostly about the Yazidi genocide and refugee movement, especially with the 1,200 people who arrived here in Canada on the promise of the government.

One Free World International had been on the ground in Iraq and Syria since the beginning of the genocide five years ago. We now have operations as well dealing with refugees in Ukraine, and also very soon with the Rohingya. When we started operations with the Yazidis, we found the government unable to build the mechanisms on the ground, especially in dealing with internally displaced people, IDPs. They are refugees who are still in their country, so the government couldn't have a mechanism. Yes, they tried to solve this problem, but I don't think there is yet a clear mechanism.

The second problem that we found was that the government counted a lot on the UN selections. While I'm encouraging, of course, dealing with the UN—it's important—there are also local NGOs on the ground that know more about the cultures, the traditions, the languages. I think it's very important that we find a balance between the UNHCR and the local NGOs and local groups.

Moving on from there, when the refugees arrived here, One Free World International had to step in because there were many services not provided to them. I found that it was a lot harder for refugees, especially when they were survivors of sex slavery. They had mental health issues. There were no mental health services provided to the refugees. We had to build our own department, with a female psychologist who spoke the language, in order to help the girls, to heal their wounds.

Let me make it clear: These girls cannot stay in Iraq anymore. We are encouraging help for the refugees and an end to the suffering of the persecuted within the borders of their country. I don't believe that any refugees want to leave their own homes. With regard to the survivors of ISIS, because there is stigma around them in Iraq, they cannot stay in Iraq. They have to find another home for them.

When they came here to Canada, there was a problem with housing. They had no credit. They had no history of credit here in the country, so the housing was extremely problematic. Landlords didn't want to rent homes to them. There were mental health issues. Even simple tasks such as grocery shopping or taking a bus were very challenging for them. We didn't find that a proper system was waiting for them upon their arrival here in Canada to help them grow on Canadian ground.

We will hear very soon from Adiba, and I believe that Adiba will share her personal story and experience. My recommendation is that we have to build a better system, and this will be provided in the recommendations that will be presented later.

I'm done. Thank you. I would like to give the rest of my time to Adiba.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you.

Please continue.

Ms. Adiba (Representative and Volunteer, One Free World International) (Interpretation): My name is Adiba. I am Yazidi.

In 2014 ISIL attacked the Yazidis and killed the Yazidi people. They took the women. They raped the young women. They hit the kids. They killed our brothers, our men. They took my own family: my sisters, my brother and the families of my maternal uncle and paternal uncle.

I grabbed the hands of my cousins and my brother, but until now we didn't know what happened to them. For years, we knew nothing about them.

Three thousand Yazidi girls were captured by ISIL members, and we know nothing about them to date. They get raped and beaten, and they get subjected to various forms of torture.

For me, it's been a year and a half in this country. It was very difficult for me to get into Canada, and even here in Canada my life has been very tough. They put us in a hotel. I don't know how to speak the language, the place is new for me and I don't know where to go. Everything has been so challenging for me.

I do thank the Canadian government for bringing us here, but I have not seen any services from the Canadian government yet, and no help when it comes to psychological assistance. All our requests.... We asked the Canadian government to help bring our families here, to bring more Yazidis here, and to send aid to the Yazidis in the camps. It's been a year that I have been working for One Free World International. We need to bring our families here. We are asking this of the government, and we have heard nothing about this demand.

I would like the government to bring in more Yazidis, and our parents too, and our families.

•(1650)

Mr. Majed El Shafie: That's it, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to begin our questioning with Mr. Whalen, please.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the members of One Free World International for their very powerful testimony.

In terms of the global compact on refugees and its objectives, if Canada were to sign it and live up to the objectives set forth therein, do you feel that would be a good thing?

Mr. Majed El Shafie: I believe that everything has to be done....

I'm sorry. Are you asking me or her?

Mr. Nick Whalen: You, Mr. El Shafie.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: I believe that everything has to be done in a balance. By that, I mean that Canada is an independent country. It is an independent state. It's a good thing to sign an agreement where we have an obligation. We do have an obligation, and we do fulfill many of these obligations internationally.

However, what scares me a little bit is the control by the UN or how much you are counting on the UN and how this can cause a lack of co-operation with other NGOs who can have a better under-

standing of the situation on the ground. Plus, they can more easily find the victims and know the best way to rescue them.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Ms. Clark-Kazak, I have the same thing for you. Would you consider the global compact on refugees a success, or at least a partial success, and should Canada ratify it? Then, in the continuation, would living up to the compact provide some additional benefit to groups that are suffering from genocide, such as the Yazidis?

Prof. Christina Clark-Kazak: I just want to clarify that as the UNHCR representative has already said, this is not a document that we would ratify or not ratify; this is a UN resolution that would be adopted or not adopted by the UN General Assembly. Canada could choose to vote against the document, but we're not actually signing on to any kind of international legal document, just to clarify that.

That said, as I mentioned, as part of a process of dealing with situations like those of the Yazidis and others on the ground, the compact does provide for a resettlement option. Canada has stepped up in relation to other populations—such as the Syrians, for example—and I think this would be an opportunity for Canada to show leadership and say that we would be willing to resettle large numbers to Canada through the provisions of the global compact, as a general overview.

Mr. Nick Whalen: When you say “large numbers”, what number would you be talking about?

Prof. Christina Clark-Kazak: About the particular situation, I defer to my colleagues who are better placed to say, but Canada has in the past resettled large numbers of people from particular contexts—for example, Indochinese refugees and Syrians—so I think it would be up to negotiations to see how many would need to be resettled in order for it to make an impact on the ground.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. El Shafie, how many people would come to Canada from the displaced Yazidi population and how many should Canada plan to take?

Mr. Majed El Shafie: We're estimating that the numbers have to be increased to 4,000. When we are talking about the Yazidi situation, we are talking mostly about the victims. I don't like to call them the “victims”; they are the victors or the survivors of ISIS. It's mostly about children and women and their families who survived ISIS—they lived.

It is estimated that 7,000 of them were kidnapped by ISIS. There are 3,200 that still remain in the hands of ISIS. We believe that at least half of this number have already been killed by air strikes or by ISIS, or by being used as human shields in the conflict.

I truly believe that the numbers have to increase to 4,000 in order to make an impact on the ground.

•(1655)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Thank you.

Moving on, then, to really what is the title of our study, “Migration Challenges and Opportunities for Canada in the 21st Century”, and trying to leverage the global compact on refugees for Canada to play a leadership role, Ms. Clark-Kazak, you talked about the development of metrics and the global academic network. Is there an opportunity for Canada to play a leadership role there?

Prof. Christina Clark-Kazak: Yes, definitely. I think that the problem with the global compact is that it's this consensus document, but there's actually very little detail. There's no funding for the global academic network and there's no secretariat set up. This is an area where Canada could offer leadership, especially given the fact that Canadian academics, for better or worse, do lead a lot of the international associations on this issue.

In terms of thinking about the scholarly or research side, I think we need to try to make sure that we are able to identify those needs, as we just witnessed here, and then to be able to bring those to the international community so there can be a solution to very pressing needs.

Mr. Nick Whalen: You did talk about co-hosting the expected forum under the global compact. I don't understand all the politics and the procedures of the UN, so maybe you'll have to educate us a bit here. If there were going to be a secretariat or some data collection agency associated with it, would this be done individually by the member states, which then would share that information through the UN, or would such a secretariat or data collection function be funded within the United Nations by the member states?

Prof. Christina Clark-Kazak: Currently the way it's being conceived of is as an independent secretariat. The UNHCR would host that secretariat until someone else stepped up to take it over. It's supposed to be independent from the member states because there's supposed to be some kind of element of oversight, so there needs to be some independence or separation from the member states.

At the moment, there is no funding allocated for it. There would need to be a donor who would step up to do that.

Mr. Nick Whalen: I'm not sure if you would have this information—maybe we would have to request it from the UN—but in your experience, what is the normal budget for a UN secretariat?

Prof. Christina Clark-Kazak: I don't know.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Maybe that's something the clerks can get for us.

I have another couple of questions, but I think I'm getting—

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay.

In terms of the hosting of this forum, there are the 23 different objectives set out in the global compact on migration, and the compact on refugees has its own. Is this meant to be a forum restricted solely to the global compact on refugees, or is it meant to address the migration compact as well as the refugee compact?

Prof. Christina Clark-Kazak: The forum itself is on the global compact on refugees only.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay.

I would also like to reiterate a statement that you made earlier about the way these documents are drafted. In fact, I think at one point you may have referred to refugees as “human resources”. I think I would maybe like to also refer to them as “human beings”. We're just trying to help human beings, and we shouldn't be trying to divide them up as assets or burdens. Remembering that little bit of

compassion, as you reminded us earlier, I think is helpful for our letter to the minister that will come out of this study.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Whalen.

Mr. Maguire, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have some questions, but first I'd like to use a couple of minutes of my time to provide notice of a couple of motions.

The first one would be that the Standing Committee on Immigration and Citizenship invite the Parliamentary Budget Officer for a two-hour meeting to discuss his report entitled “Costing Irregular Migration across Canada's Southern Border” before the House rises before Christmas.

The second one would be that the committee on immigration and citizenship formally request that the Auditor General undertake a fulsome review of the irregular migrants crossing the southern border, and that the audit include IRCC, IRB, RCMP, CBSA, CSIS and the functioning of the ad hoc intergovernmental task force on irregular migration.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Larry Maguire: I want to thank the witnesses for being here today.

We have a bit of a dilemma, I think, in that the safe third country agreement defines a family member as including sisters and brothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, grandchildren, uncles and aunts, etc. It means that someone who crosses the border illegally can have as many extended family members as they want cross into Canada legally at a port of entry. On the other hand, the one-year window of opportunity provision, which allows resettled refugees to sponsor family members to Canada, defines family members only as a spouse and children.

We know that this has been difficult for Yazidis in Canada. Many of the women have, as indicated, lost their husbands or other male members of the family and wish they could sponsor other male relatives. Do you think it's fair that illegal border crossers are allowed to bring extended family members into the country when Yazidi refugees are not allowed to do so?

Could I have your comments, please, Majed?

● (1700)

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Is that for me or for her?

Mr. Larry Maguire: It's for you first, and then if Adiba wants to respond too, that would be great as well.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Did you understand the question?

[Witness speaks in foreign language]

Ms. Adiba: *[Witness speaks in foreign language]*

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Okay.

When it comes to victims of genocide, any genocide, I believe we have to make it clear that there is an exception here. When we are talking about genocide, we are talking about a whole generation, a whole family, being killed. One of the major effects we see in the victims or survivors of genocide is the way in which they have been divided from their family. I think we need to have an exception for any survivor of genocide in order to make them feel united again, to make them feel whole again.

The problem is that we think the genocide is over, that it was four or five years ago and it's over. In reality, the genocide is still going: There are still people who are stuck there and there are still people who are missing, with no news of them.

The short answer is that I believe extending permission or making an exception for them is very proper.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Thank you.

I would also note, as we have with others, that there was a shortfall in regard to the mental health provided and the translation. They needed housing. They had no credit. These kinds of things were difficult. We've heard from witnesses in regard to how to deal with these and to try to make these services that are required when they first get here more accessible.

You talked about building a better system. What would some of your suggestions be there? What do you suppose the government should do to be able to be more helpful in that area?

Mr. Majed El Shafie: I think it's with regard to the mental health issues. We're all talking about mental health issues. One thing would be to build bridges with the community upon their arrival.

For example, a year ago Adiba had a meltdown situation. She was watching something on the Internet and she had a complete meltdown. We had to take her to the Mackenzie hospital. I wasn't present. I was in another area, but I came as quickly as I could. When I got there, I saw that the Mackenzie hospital had decided to tie her hands and her legs to the bed. That's exactly what ISIS used to do before they assaulted her.

We have a video of that. We have evidence of what happened. We have to educate our workers about what these people are going through. These are not crazy people running around; these people are victims. They're survivors. I like to call them "victors". They have a special need, and in order to deal with this, I believe we need to educate our team about the situation before they arrive. I believe it is very important that we build bridges with these communities.

In terms of institutions, when we speak with certain members in the government about mental health issues, they say there are institutions out there and you can just go and knock on their door, but none of the victims of sex slavery will go knock on that door. This will not happen. They are hurt—plus, there's a stigma about mental health issues within their country. They believe if you go to a psychologist, the people in your community will not speak very kindly of you.

Therefore, you have to build bridges. You have to go knock on their doors, sit down with them, and explain to them how important it is in order to move forward in their lives. Building better bridges,

communicating with the community, and educating our workers before they deal with them are all extremely important.

● (1705)

Mr. Larry Maguire: Thank you.

It seems that we're a compassionate country, as Adiba pointed out. However, one of the things I take from your comments is that we need to do a much better job of knowing who's coming, when they're arriving and how to greet them when they first get here, so they can follow a path and be understood better as they arrive.

Would that be the case?

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Yes, with one simple correction: We are a very compassionate country. We are.

I will never forget—

Mr. Larry Maguire: But we're not providing the services.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Let me explain why I said that.

I am one of those people who believe that the government should not do everything on its own. The community has to help. It takes a village.

I saw the bus driver who took them without taking the fare from them, or I took them to the supermarket and refused to take money from them to honour them—

The Chair: I need you to draw to a close, please.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: I saw how the Canadian people are—generous and kind. We have gaps in the system that have to be covered in order to make it a better system.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses. Particularly, I'd like to acknowledge and say thank you to you, Adiba, for coming forward as a witness. It's extremely difficult and I think courageous for you to come to share your story with us and to be that advocate and voice for change. I want to acknowledge that.

As we're talking about the global compact, one of the issues is that it does not include the internally displaced, which the Yazidi community is. Therefore, there's a flaw, if you will, within the global compact.

From the internally displaced community's point of view, from the Yazidis' point of view, one of the issues that you've raised is that you would like to see Canada bring more Yazidis to the country. Part of that is with respect to family reunification.

Would you agree, then, that the government should allow for the one-year window of opportunity initiative to not have a deadline, so in the event that you have a surviving family member out there, that family would be able to come through the one-year window of opportunity stream?

Ms. Adiba (Interpretation): We've been here for one year. I have asked the government to bring my family to Canada. My family is still in refugee camps. They want to come here. Yazidis in camps have no life. They are not living properly.

I would like to call on the Government of Canada to bring in our families. I've been here for a year and a half, and that's my plea to the government. Unfortunately, I have never heard back from the government.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: When you say “family members”, how are they related to you? Can you tell our committee that? Are they your aunts, your cousins, your sisters?

Ms. Adiba (Interpretation): My father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, maternal and paternal uncles: all Yazidis are like my family.

You are here. You can't imagine how Yazidis are living in refugee camps. I came right from a refugee camp. I know what they're experiencing very well. I'm sure they know that they don't have a future and their future is grim.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Canada has this funny definition of what is deemed to be family, and “nuclear family” is how we define it. Of course, for your community—and many other communities as well—the family unit is far beyond that; it's the extended family.

I think in your context, you are also referring to your Yazidi brothers and sisters in the broader community, because your community faces a genocide. I think what I'm hearing is that you're calling for the government to change the family reunification definition of “family” to include the extended family.

Am I correct in understanding that?

• (1710)

Ms. Adiba (Interpretation): Yes.

What I want from the Canadian government is that they receive all the Yazidis, especially in refugee camps, to bring in Yazidis as much as they can, or to deliver aid to them in the refugee camps.

However, more importantly, I want the Canadian government to increase the numbers, not only the 1,200 families. That's a very small number compared to the number of Yazidis being persecuted.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

Mr. El Shafie, you referred to 4,000 Yazidis for the Canadian government to resettle. Can I assume that is the 4,000 that Adiba is also referring to, for the government to resettle?

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Yes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Ms. Clark-Kazak, is that something that you would support? I know earlier you couldn't give a number, but now we've heard from people from the Yazidi community, who are advocating for that number. Is that something that you would support as well?

Prof. Christina Clark-Kazak: I would support the resettlement of as many Yazidis as necessary to resolve that long-standing and entrenched issue. I think this is where Canada has shown leadership in the past and this is where Canada can show leadership now.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I note that the trauma as a survivor is significant. How important is it to have people from your community, other Yazidi members and your extended family members, here during your healing process and your recovery from that trauma?

My question is for Adiba.

Ms. Adiba (Interpretation): The need is to help the girls who are here by bringing their families from Iraq. We don't have any psychological services offered by the government. We've seen this from One Free World International, but not from the government, just from that organization, which provides doctors and psychologists and that kind of help.

We are in a new country. We have the language barrier. We don't know anything about the new country, so if it weren't for One Free World International supporting the Yazidis, it would have been so difficult for Yazidis.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: To answer your question, I do believe that bringing the family together is an important step for healing the wounds of the genocide, yes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Adiba, I know the trauma is significant, and Mr. El Shafie, you mentioned that she had a meltdown. I believe that it was a convulsion disorder that she has suffered and that other survivors suffer that as well.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Indeed.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Doctors have indicated that one path forward to assist them is to bring their family members here so that they can be around loved ones and other Yazidi families for emotional support as well.

To that end, I wonder whether or not—

The Chair: I'm afraid I need to stop you there. That's your time.

Mr. Ayoub, we have two minutes for you. Sorry.

[Translation]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You're taking me by surprise. I didn't think that I had any time, but I'll try to make good use of these two minutes.

First of all, I want to say that Ms. Adiba's presentation touched me deeply. Unfortunately, in two minutes, I don't have the time to elaborate on the subject. I'll focus on the global compact initiative.

Does a fear of foreigners and a fear of welcoming people, such as Ms. Adiba, who have faced some difficult situations explain the withdrawal of certain countries and the existence of rhetoric that pits the countries against the people in danger?

Ms. Christina Clark-Kazak: As Mr. Smith said, this is a domestic policy issue. It's true that a population that fears foreigners will push local politicians to not accept immigrants.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Do you think this political rhetoric is being used in Canada?

• (1715)

Ms. Christina Clark-Kazak: We need only to look at what has happened in Quebec and Ontario recently. There's reason to be concerned about what could happen at the federal level.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you. We need to close this part of the meeting.

I'm going to do two things, though. I would like to request that the clerk forward some documents to One Free World International. I think you have this, but I want to make sure you have the report that was done by our committee in March 2018, as well as the government response that was tabled to the House of Commons on August 22 and the debate in the House of Commons on November 28. I just want to make sure your organization has those documents, because I think that they are relevant to some of our discussion here.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: I would appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We will make sure those are forwarded by the clerk.

Second, thank you both for your testimony. I'm going to suggest that the bulk of the testimony from One Free World International be included in our migration study report, because it was really on migration. It was not really part of our global compact report.

Mr. Majed El Shafie: Yes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Chair, on that point, I think it should be noted, though, that the global compact does not include internally displaced people, and that is a flaw within it. That is also an explicit purpose for these witnesses to have been invited here: to point that out as part of the flaw. I don't think it should be excluded, Mr. Chair. Perhaps it could be included in both, if you like, but that is one flaw of the global compact that exists.

The Chair: It is a perceived flaw; I understand that.

Thank you very much. We're going to close this part of the meeting now and move to the business meeting, which is in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <http://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.noscommunes.ca>