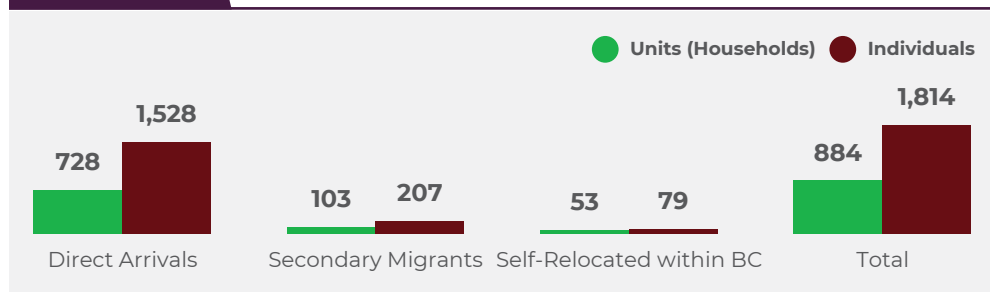# ISS of BC — WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

GAR BULLETIN

GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEE (GAR) ARRIVALS IN BC | 2025

REPORTING PERIOD:
JANUARY 1—DECEMBER 31, 2025

This annual bulletin provides an overview of Government-Assisted Refugee arrivals to British Columbia between January 1—December 31, 2025. It summarizes arrival numbers and provides analysis of what these figures mean for the province's resettlement landscape.
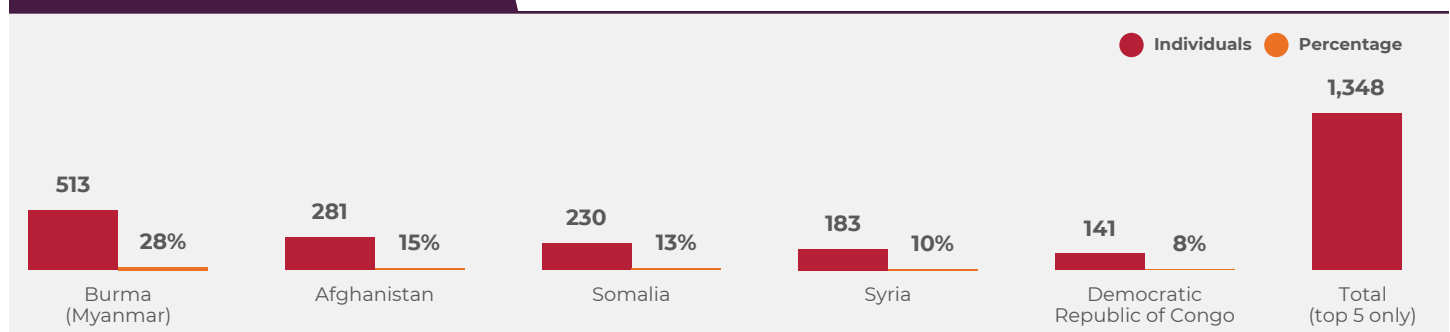
ARRIVALS

Legend: Units (Households) | Individuals

- Direct Arrivals: 728 / 1,528
- Secondary Migrants: 103 / 207
- Self-Relocated within BC: 53 / 79
- Total: 884 / 1,814

The data captures how Government-Assisted Refugees arrived and moved within BC in 2025. Below is an explanation of each category and what it means for service providers and communities.

- **Direct arrivals** represent GAR families who came straight to BC through the federal Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). In 2025, 1,528 individuals (728 households) arrived directly to BC.
- **Secondary migrants** are GARs who first settled in another province but later moved to BC. 207 individuals (103 households) did so in 2025.
- **Self-relocated** within BC refers to GARs moving between BC communities after their initial placement. 79 individuals (53 households) were part of this group.
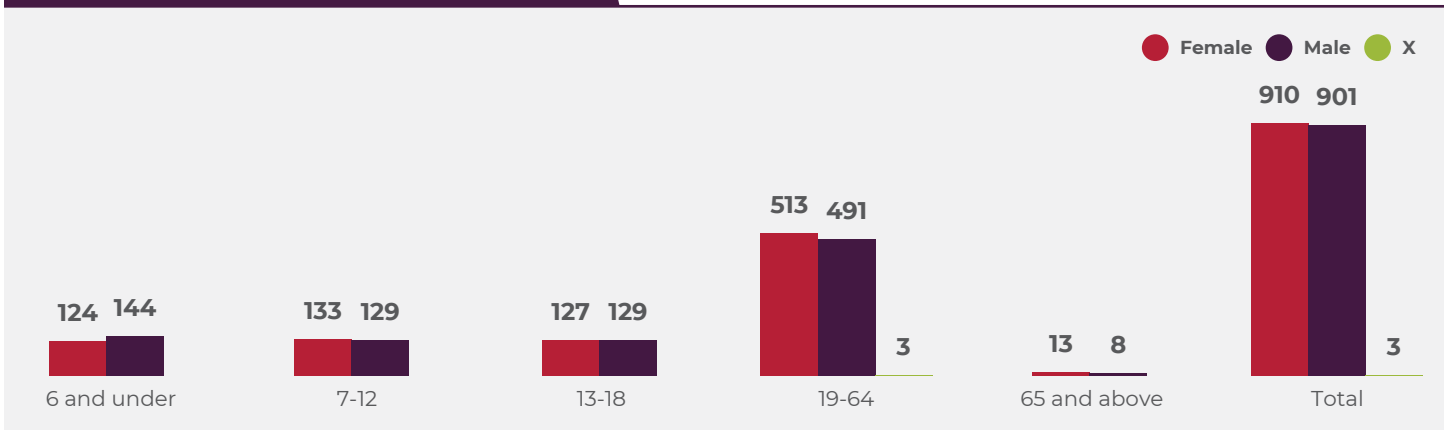
GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEE (GAR)

A person who is outside Canada and has been determined to be a Convention refugee and who receives financial and other support from the Government of Canada or Province of Quebec for up to one year after their arrival in Canada.

GARs are selected from applicants referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other referral organizations.

SOURCE: canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship/helpcentre/glossary.html#government_assisted_refugee

TOP 5 SOURCE COUNTRIES

Legend: Individuals | Percentage

- Burma (Myanmar): 513 — 28%
- Afghanistan: 281 — 15%
- Somalia: 230 — 13%
- Syria: 183 — 10%
- Democratic Republic of Congo: 141 — 8%
- Total (top 5 only): 1,348

The majority of Government-Assisted Refugees arriving in BC in 2025 originated from Burma (Myanmar), followed by Afghanistan and Somalia. Together, these countries accounted for over 56% of all GAR arrivals.

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION

Legend: 🔴 Female ⬤ Male 🟢 X

Age group	Female	Male	X
6 and under	124	144	
7-12	133	129	
13-18	127	129	
19-64	513	491	3
65 and above	13	8	
Total	910	901	3

Over half (57%) of GARs arriving in 2025 were adults over 19 years of age, with the remaining 43% being children and youth under 18. The female/male balance was relatively even across age groups.

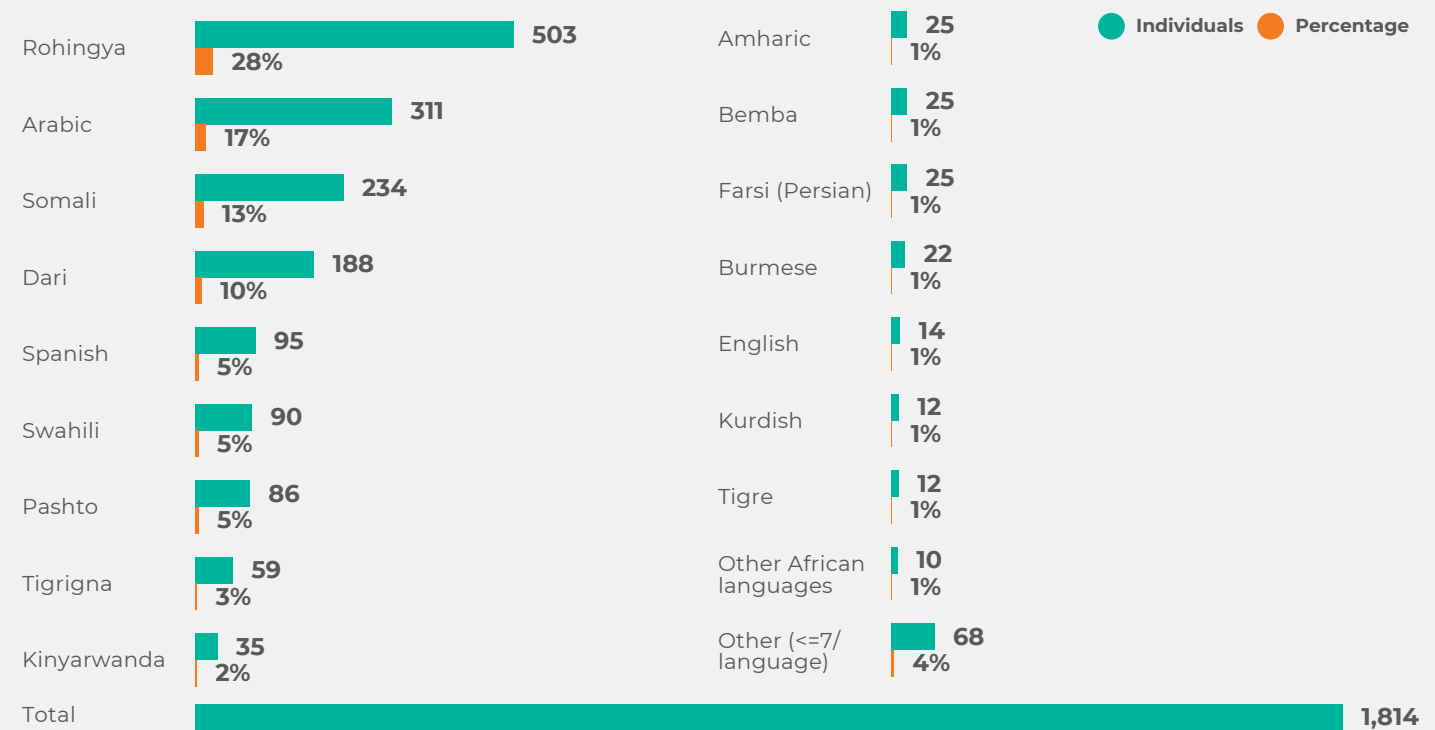## TOP 5 DESTINATIONS BY MUNICIPALITY

VANCOUVER
55 Individuals (3%)

BURNABY
72 Individuals (4%)

NEW WESTMINSTER
36 Individuals (2%)

DELTA
43 Individuals (2%)

SURREY
1391 Individuals (77%)

Surrey continued to receive the majority of GAR arrivals in BC, accounting for 77% of all new individuals in 2025. Burnaby and Vancouver followed as secondary destinations, with smaller arrivals in Delta and New Westminster.

TOP 5 LANGUAGES SPOKEN

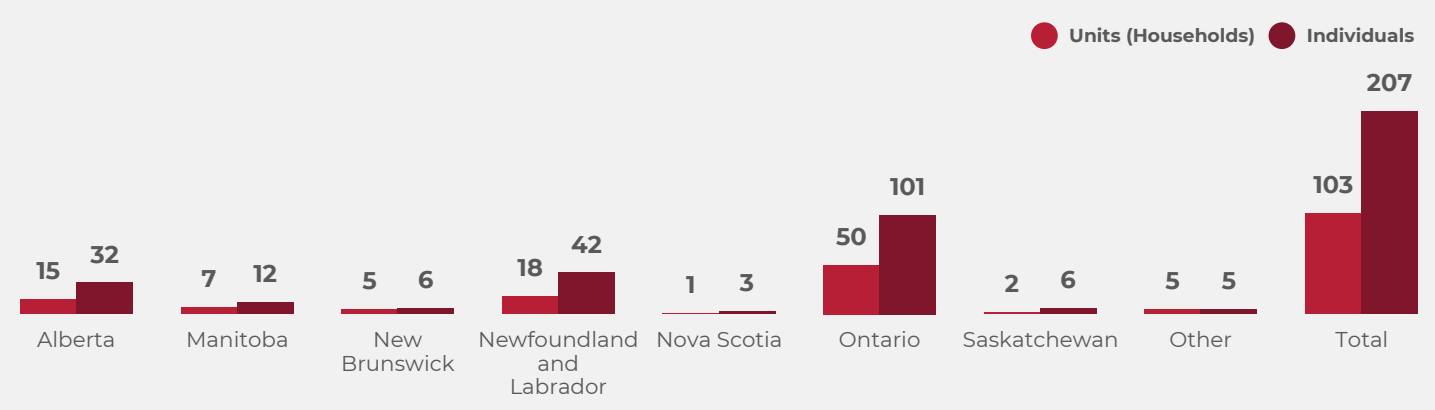| Language	Count
Rohingya	503
Arabic	311
Somali	234
Dari	188
Spanish	95
Total	1,331

The most commonly spoken languages among new arrivals were Rohingya, Arabic, Somali, Dari, and Spanish. These reflect the linguistic diversity of GAR populations and highlight the importance of interpretation and culturally appropriate settlement supports.

ALL LANGUAGES SPOKEN AMONG GAR ARRIVALS

Legend: ● Individuals ● Percentage

Language	Individuals	Percentage
Rohingya	503	28%
Arabic	311	17%
Somali	234	13%
Dari	188	10%
Spanish	95	5%
Swahili	90	5%
Pashto	86	5%
Tigrigna	59	3%
Kinyarwanda	35	2%
Amharic	25	1%
Bemba	25	1%
Farsi (Persian)	25	1%
Burmese	22	1%
English	14	1%
Kurdish	12	1%
Tigre	12	1%
Other African languages	10	1%
Other (<=7/ language)	68	4%
Total	1,814	

Across all GAR arrivals, Rohingya and Arabic speakers made up the largest language groups. This diversity emphasizes the continued need for multilingual resources and language-specific support in housing, health, and employment programs.

SELF-RELOCATED ORIGINAL DESTINATIONS

Legend: ● Units (Households) ● Individuals

Province	Units (Households)	Individuals
Alberta	15	32
Manitoba	7	12
New Brunswick	5	6
Newfoundland and Labrador	18	42
Nova Scotia	1	3
Ontario	50	101
Saskatchewan	2	6
Other	5	5
Total	103	207

A small number of GARs relocated to BC from other provinces. Such movements indicate ongoing secondary migration motivated by family connections or perceived opportunities in employment and housing in BC.

SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS – 2025

The data for 2025 reinforces BC's continued role as a key destination for Government-Assisted Refugees in Canada. Arrivals are family-oriented, multilingual, and concentrated in urban centres, particularly Surrey and Burnaby. The majority originate from Burma (Myanmar), Afghanistan, and Somalia, aligning with global humanitarian priorities.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MYANMAR (BURMA)

Myanmar continues to face overlapping humanitarian crises caused by years of armed conflict, persecution of ethnic minorities, and political instability following the 2021 military coup. Violence between the army and ethnic armed groups in Kachin, Shan, Kayin, and Rakhine States has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom are women and children.

The Rohingya, a Muslim minority group in Rakhine State, remain the most persecuted. Denied citizenship under Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law, they are effectively stateless and continue to face systematic violence, restrictions on movement, and denial of basic services. More than a million Rohingya have fled since 2017, primarily to Bangladesh, where many remain in refugee camps.

Across the country, limited humanitarian access, civilian casualties, and the destruction of infrastructure have deepened vulnerability. Ongoing displacement and discrimination leave millions in need of aid or resettlement options through international programs, including Canada's Government-Assisted Refugee pathway.

SOURCE: Global Affairs Canada—**Evaluation of Canada's Strategy to respond to the Rohingya and Myanmar crises — 2017-18 to 2022-23**

WHY THERE ARE SO MANY ROHINGYA REFUGEES

The Rohingya have endured decades of exclusion and targeted violence. Large-scale military campaigns have driven repeated mass exoduses, most recently in 2017 when villages were burned and civilians killed. As stateless people, they cannot return safely or rebuild lives in Myanmar, prompting global resettlement efforts.

For British Columbia, the high number of GARs from Myanmar reflects these push factors: persecution, lack of citizenship, long-term displacement in camps, and Canada's commitment to providing durable solutions for the most at-risk refugee populations.

ROHINGYA PHRASES

Hello / *Asalaamualaikum*
How are you / *Tui ken aso*
Thank you / *Sukria*
You're welcome / *Sukria faribo*
See you! / *Abar doloyum*!

ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

- Council on Foreign Relations—**What Forces Are Fueling Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis?**
- UNHCR—**Myanmar Emergency**
- Human Rights Watch—**World Report 2025: Myanmar**
- World Vision—**The Rohingya refugee crisis explained**
- Global Affairs Canada—**Evaluation of Canada's Strategy to Respond to the Rohingya and Myanmar Crises (2017–23)**
- RSTP—**Myanmar/Burma Country Condition Information**
- Associated Press—**Myanmar, Burma and why the different names matter**
- Global Affairs Canada—**Canada's Strategy to respond to the Rohingya and Myanmar crises (2021-24)**

A ***push factor*** is something that forces or motivates people to leave their home country or community.

Relating to migration and refugees, push factors are the ***negative conditions*** that "push" people away and drive people to seek safety elsewhere, such as:

- Conflict and war
- Persecution
- Human rights abuses

Pull factors are the ***positive conditions*** that attract people to a new place, such as safety, education, jobs, or family reunification.