

Myanmar's Diaspora in Canada

Last Updated: May 30, 2024

Situation

The situation in Myanmar has led to significant Myanmar-based activity among the diverse diaspora in Canada.

Background

Myanmar diaspora are spread out across Canada.

- There are approximately [17,000 Myanmar diaspora](#) members (Burmese, Chin, and Karen) living across Canada.
- Approximately [9000 were born in Myanmar and migrated to Canada](#). The remainder were either born outside of Myanmar and/or are second generation immigrants.

Myanmar diaspora are a deeply active and engaged community.

- Myanmar diaspora in Canada, [like in many other countries](#), are deeply engaged in political engagement and advocacy activities. They engage in [protests](#), [cultural festivals](#), [fundraisers](#), and [high-level hostings of Myanmar political delegations](#).
- Active organizations include: [Burma Canadian Association of Ontario](#), [Rohingya Centre of Canada](#), [Chin Community of Canada](#). More are on figure 1.

Communities around the world are engaged in “crowdfunding” for the NUG and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs).

- As is the case [around the world](#), Myanmar diaspora are actively engaged in supporting the efforts of the pro-democracy National Unity Government (NUG), Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) despite a lack of institutional support and financial difficulties.

The amount of refugees accepted into Canada from Myanmar is increasing but is still less than previous years.

- A large portion of incoming Myanmar nationals and Myanmar-origin individuals are entering Canada as refugees or are claiming refugee status upon arrival, especially given [recently activated conscription laws](#) in Myanmar.
- In 2006-7, the [Conservative Government brought in 2000 Karen refugees](#).
- The amount of refugees accepted is [slowly increasing but not to pre-2011 levels](#).
- The amount of international students is increasing but [is at risk due to recent restrictions](#).

Recommendation

1. The Canadian Government should promote diaspora activities as they are directly interlinked with Canadian interests in inclusive democratic activity in Myanmar.
2. The Parliamentary Friends of Burma should promote Advocacy Days and Youth Internships with the Burmese diaspora.
3. The Canadian Government should encourage the recipients of Myanmar funding to work with various diaspora groups.
4. Policy to allow for more refugees and students from Myanmar should be promoted.

Figures

Figure 1. Myanmar Activity Across Canada. Source: [Napas Thein and MyPACK](#)



Figure 2. Place of Residence of Myanmar-Born Canadian Immigrants (Excludes those born of Myanmar. Source: [Statistics Canada](#) (2021)

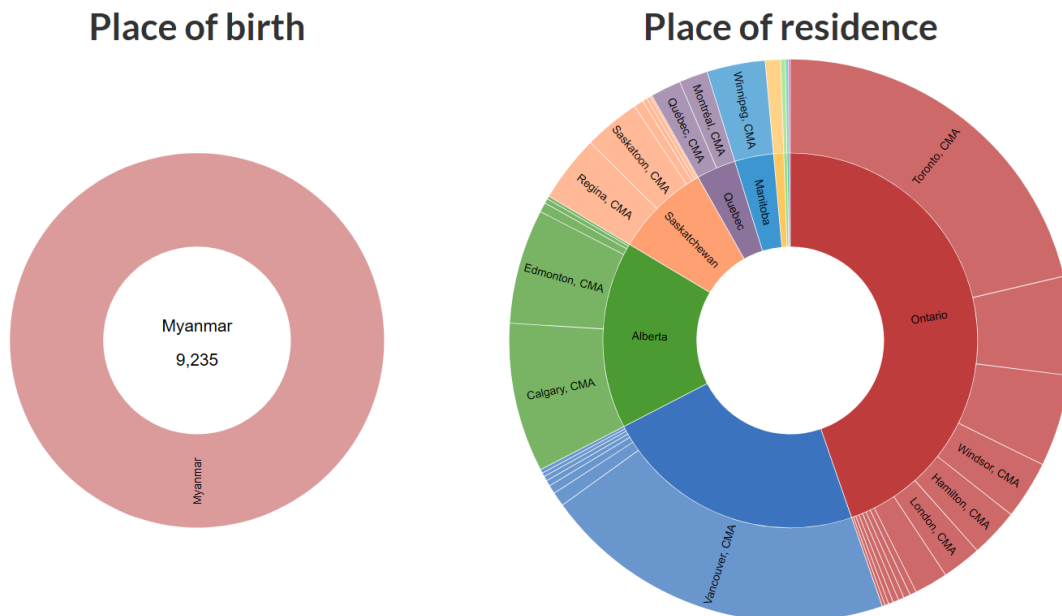


Figure 3. Demographic Makeup by Ethnic Origins. Source: [Statistics Canada](#) (2021)

Myanmar Diaspora (Census)

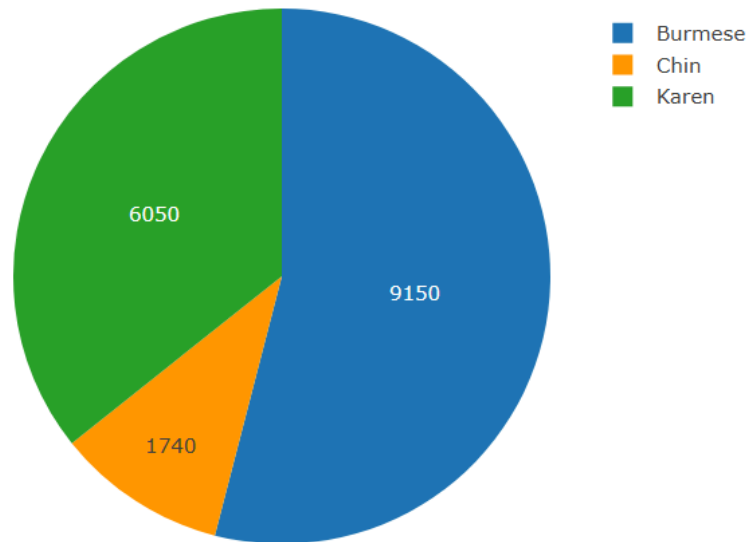


Figure 4. Linguistic Makeup. Source: [Statistics Canada](#) (2021)

Knowledge of Languages

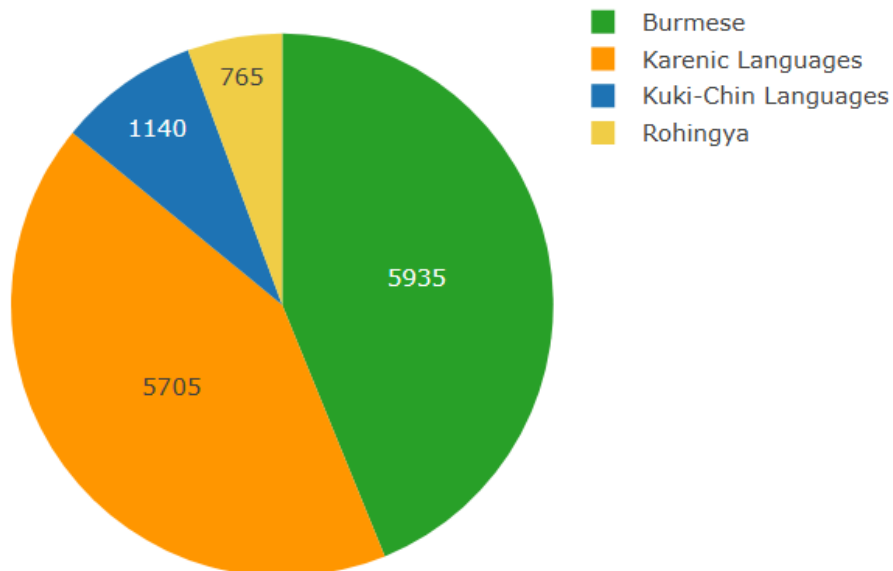
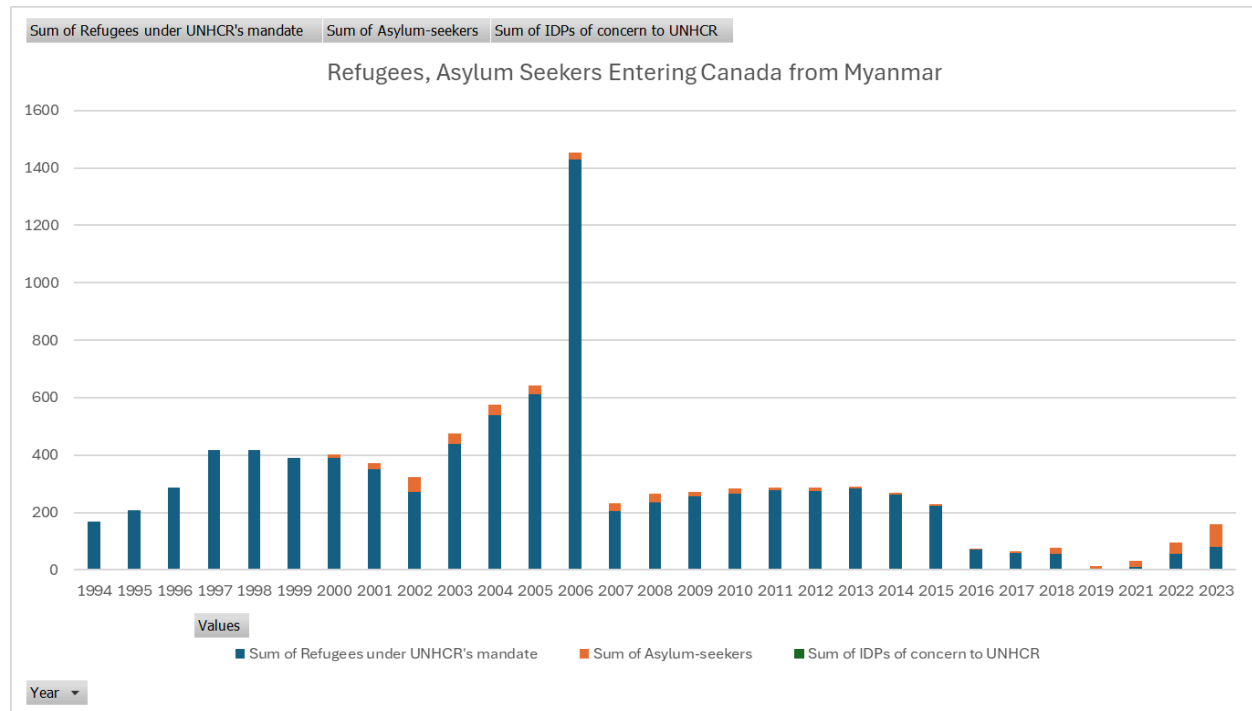
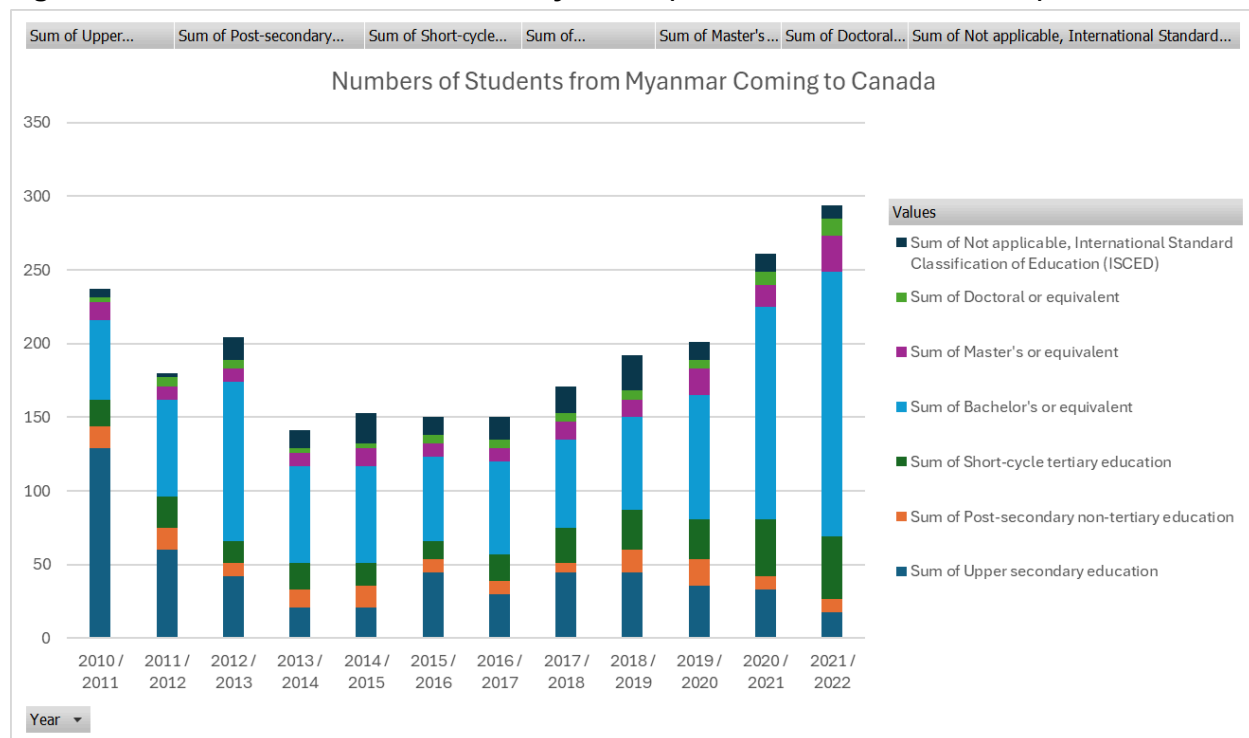


Figure 5: Refugees, Asylum Seekers Entering Canada from Myanmar (Source: [UNHCR](#))



Spike in 2006-7 was from a commitment by the Harper Government to allow 2000 Karen refugees into Canada. Stark decline after 2015 coincides with Myanmar's liberalization period after 2011 and election of the National League for Democracy in 2015.

Figure 6: International Students from Myanmar (Source: [Statistics Canada](#))



Decrease from 2010 to 2015 is unexplained. Increase from 2015 to 2019 coincides with the election of the NLD in 2015. Slight spike from 2020 to 2021-2 coincides with COVID-19 and Myanmar's military coup in 2021.