

May 7, 2024

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau

Prime Minister of Canada
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Hon. Marc Miller

Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
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Cc: Migrant Rights Network - letters@migrantrights.ca

RE: Regularize All Undocumented People and Ensure Permanent Resident Status for All Migrants

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Miller,

The Council has 150,000 thousand members and supporters across the country. We also have volunteer chapters across the country that have organized effective get out the vote campaigns in their communities and will do so again.

In December 2021, Prime Minister Trudeau made a [mandate letter](#) commitment asking the Immigration Minister to create a “regularization program” for undocumented migrants. That promise has been repeated many times, and most recently the Minister promised to bring a proposal to Cabinet in the [Spring](#) of 2024.

The migrant care worker program is expiring on June 17, and unless it is replaced thousands of migrant women will become undocumented. Already, [many of them cannot apply for permanent residency because of impossible-to-achieve language testing and educational accreditation requirements](#).

Landlords are raising rents beyond reach, grocery monopolies are making it harder to put food on our tables, and lobbyist-driven governments are privatizing health care and education. But it’s im/migrants that are being scapegoated for the affordability crisis as racism is used to divide and distract us. The federal government has capped study permits, students can’t be with their families and permanent residency has been capped which means more people than ever will remain on temporary and exploitative permits.

The federal government needs to choose: Will the Trudeau government fan the flames of anti-immigrant xenophobia or to build a fair society with equal rights for all which is only possible when everyone has the same immigration rights?

The federal government must ensure equal rights for all by: Immediately creating a comprehensive and inclusive [regularization program](#) that allows all undocumented people to apply for permanent resident status immediately. This means: No caps, no restrictions by industry of work or geography, and no two-step immigration which only gives temporary work permits.

This must include:

- The creation of an [interim program for migrant caregivers](#) in Canada to apply for permanent resident status without educational accreditation and language test score requirements;
- An end to migrant exploitation by ending tied work permits and hours of work limits for international students; and ensuring permanent resident status for all working class people in Canada today.

The Council of Canadians calls on your government to explicitly endorse the principles in the attached proposals on regularization and for migrant careworkers, prepared by the Migrant Rights Network.

Regularization is part of ending systemic racism and ensuring gender equality: Undocumented people and migrants are mostly racialized, low-waged people, often women. Ensuring rights and access for them is part of implementing anti-racist policy and gender equality.

Regularization will ensure improved labour conditions: Employers of migrant workers, international students and undocumented workers threaten them with deportations to stop them from asserting their rights. This abuse results in overall worsening of working conditions in the labour market. While bad employers prosper, good employers who may be unable or unwilling to hire workers informally or for cash payments are disadvantaged.

Regularization will ensure public health: Migrants often do not access health care until it is absolutely necessary due to the costs. By the time they do, their health conditions are much more complicated, and the burden on the health care system is much higher.

Regularization will ensure more effective social policy: Currently, there are no reliable statistics on undocumented people in Canada. An inclusive regularization program will ensure that non-status people enter into everyday life, allowing for more informed and effective social policy to be created.

Regularization builds on best practices around the world: Between 1996 and 2008, 24 of the 27 EU Member States implemented regularization programs, and some several times. An estimated 5.5 to 6 million people were regularized in that time. The largest programs were the Italian 2002 program that regularized 634,000 people and the Spanish 2005 program that regularized 578,375 people. Last year, Ireland regularized most undocumented people in the country who met a basic residency requirement.

Regularization responds to a growing voice: Almost every major civil society, labour, health and environmental organization has joined the call for full and permanent immigration status for all - nearly 500 organizations. Major organizations from across Canada have also written letters to Prime Minister Trudeau

supporting the Migrant Rights Network's regularization proposal. On September 17, 2023, the network organized demonstrations in 15 cities in Canada, which were endorsed by over 200 organizations.

Regularization is an essential part of a Just Transition: A green economy that serves climate, workers and community must be founded on the equality of all residents. By ensuring equal status for all migrants, we would remove a significant barrier to equality. Migrants, including refugees and non-status people, have always worked here — raising our kids, caring for our parents, and picking our food. These are some of the most insecure and exploitative jobs in Canada. But they're precisely the parts of our economy that we need to support and expand: nursing, child- and elder-care, farming, and domestic labor. They are low-carbon, too. We all need to pull together to change our economy and society to avert climate disaster and that requires bringing in those who are currently excluded by immigration laws.

Regularization takes responsibility for climate migrants: The climate emergency has caused a [25 per cent](#) increase in economic inequality between the richest countries and the poorest. Canada is one of the world's largest [greenhouse gas emitters by population](#). In 2015, it was estimated that Canada's debt to poorer countries for its role in causing the climate crisis was [at roughly \\$400 billion](#). This enormous share of responsibility in causing the climate crisis constitutes a moral obligation to welcome migrants with open arms, and implement climate solutions that get at the root of the crisis and leave no one behind. This obligation is further reinforced by Canada's position as a leader in mining devastation - [75% of the planet's mining exploration and exploitation companies had their headquarters in Canada in 2012](#). The mass degradation of natural resources, ecology, and species extinction connected to development projects led by Canadian companies has led to destruction of land-based ways of life, and mass impoverishment of people in the Global South, shrinking economic opportunities for everyone and creating the conditions for migration to Canada. Many migrants, on work, tourist or study permits, refugees and undocumented people, are here because of climate displacement, not just those from mass weather events. Giving equal rights to migrants is part of paying off Canada's climate debt.

The time for regularization is now. We expect your government will treat this with the seriousness it deserves and ensure status for all.

With urgency,



Christina Warner, Executive Director

The Council of Canadians