



CANADIAN MUSLIM  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
COUNCIL



RIGHTING  
RELATIONS

Rural Refugee  
Rights Network



August 27, 2025

**The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.**  
**Prime Minister of Canada**

**The Honourable Lena Diab, P.C.**  
**Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada**

**The Honourable Anita Anand, P.C.**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, P.C.**  
**Minister of Public Safety**

**Re: Immediate Action Needed to Fulfill Canada's Humanitarian Commitment for Gaza  
Family Reunification Through the Temporary Resident Visa (December 2023)**

Dear Prime Minister Carney, Minister Diab, Minister Anand, and Minister Anandasangaree:

We write to you as a Coalition of organizations working towards Gaza Family Reunification: Amnesty International Canada, Canadians for Peace and Justice in the Middle East, Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Committee, Sustainable Human Empowerment (SHE) Associates, Rural Refugee Rights Network, Righting Relations Canada, and The United Church of Canada. We stand in solidarity with the Palestinian Canadian community, who have endured unbearable loss while waiting for Canada to live up to its promise of safety and family reunification for loved ones trapped under siege in Gaza.

Since the launch of the [Gaza Temporary Resident Visa \(TRV\) Special Measures for Extended Family Program](#) in December 2023, family members and Human Rights advocates alike have described it as a system designed to fail. We have described the pain and indignity experienced by applicants again and again, and still thousands of families wait in agony.

The [Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel \(CUAET\)](#) program clearly demonstrated what Canada can accomplish: welcoming 129,000 Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion in the first year alone, and waiving security screening for children and seniors. By comparison, only 864 Palestinians have made it to Canada as of July 8, 2025, and the vast majority left Gaza on their own. **Canadian officials have assisted in the evacuation of fewer than 2% of program applicants** directly from Gaza, and only where applicants had previously

approved biometrics, [despite program guidelines](#). As a result, not only do thousands of applicants remain stranded in Gaza, we have [confirmed reports of families who have been separated at evacuation points by the Canadian Government](#).

Other countries have shown that evacuations are possible when there is political will: while Canadian officials hide behind bureaucracy, [France evacuated 115 people in a single flight this past April](#). By refusing to evacuate applicants without biometrics - something the program acknowledges is impossible to obtain in Gaza - Canada is imposing a reverse onus burden, treating all Palestinians as a security threat, a blatant example of anti-Palestinian racism that is condemning innocent people to starvation and death.

Canada recognized the severity of the situation in [a July 21st joint statement with 25 other countries](#), admitting that “**the suffering of civilians in Gaza has reached new depths**” with “the inhumane killing of civilians, including children, seeking to meet their most basic needs of water and food”. As the situation in Gaza becomes more desperate each day, families and supporters have organized vigils, met with officials, and documented every barrier, yet the results remain the same: empty promises, endless paperwork, and preventable deaths.

**We therefore demand the following urgent and immediate actions:**

- **Immediately open a humanitarian corridor to urgently evacuate all program applicants** to prevent further death and physical and psychological harm to those who, by all rights, should have been in Canada with their families long ago. In the alternative, urgently approve all remaining TRV applications from Gaza immediately or within 14 days, as was done for Ukrainians, and facilitate their speedy evacuation, as we have seen done by other countries.
- **Waive Biometrics Requirements:** The TRV Program guidelines have never required biometrics for evacuation; implement an immediate policy to waive biometric requirements for exit.
- **Expedite Application Processing:** Commit to a 14-day visa application turnaround and immediately clear out the massive backlog of applicants in both Gaza and Egypt.
- **Coordinate Medical Evacuation:** Work with the World Health Organization and other NGOs on the ground to immediately evacuate the hundreds of identified critical medical cases of TRV program applicants,
- **Address Anti-Palestinian Racism:** Commit to addressing anti-Palestinian racism within the TRV program by:
  - i. Ending the assessment and monitoring of social media accounts.
  - ii. Taking active steps to reduce the weaponization of Section 34.1 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA).
  - iii. Providing clear and transparent guidelines for both IRCC and CBSA staff in processing and responding to TRV applications.
  - iv. Ending the practice of treating all applicants as potential security risks.

- **Exert Diplomatic Pressure:** Exercise Canada's diplomatic presence in the region to ensure immediate evacuation from Gaza of all TRV program applicants.
- **Honor the Program's Scope:** Commit to the approval of 7,500 individuals – 5,000 under the Special Measures cap and an additional 2,500 on humanitarian and compassionate grounds – as agreed to in community meetings with IRCC staff.
- **Provide Comprehensive Settlement Support:** Ensure Gazan families receive the same treatment, respect, and support as other groups Canada has welcomed in times of crisis. Harmonize resettlement services and health care access with provincial and territorial partners, ensuring that when health care barriers arise at the provincial level, Interim Federal Health will be extended until such obstacles are overcome.

Canada cannot claim to stand for human rights and equality while it abandons Palestinian families to die waiting. As organizations who have been advocating for the Federal Government to take urgent action to support Gazan Canadians and their families since October 2023, we urge you to work with us to honour your legal and moral obligations. Over 18 months ago, Canada made a commitment to reunite Palestinians in this country with their loved ones. That promise is long overdue, and we are asking what this new government will do to bring it to fulfilment.

**This is not a policy debate — it is a matter of life and death. We urge you to commit to an intensive, urgent, goals-oriented ongoing working partnership to end the suffering so many families continue to endure.**

We are requesting a meeting to discuss how to move forward as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Ketty Nivyabandi, Secretary General, Amnesty International Canadian Section  
(English-speaking)

Khaled Alqazzaz, Executive Director, Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council

Michael Bueckert, Acting President, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East

Ally Crockford, National Coordinator, Righting Relations Canada

Matthew Behrens, Co-ordinator, Rural Refugee Rights Network

Urooj Mian, Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Human Empowerment (SHE) Associates

Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary, The United Church of Canada