

The Honourable Marc Miller P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
365 Laurier Avenue West Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1L1

12 December 2024

Dear Minister Miller:

We trust this letter finds you well amidst what we know are many responsibilities. We are grateful for your work on behalf of all Canadians.

We are writing to follow up on our letter from September 17 of this year, which we sent to you prior to the immigration levels announcement. As you may remember, in that letter we expressed our hope that Canada would remain committed to strengthening its refugee protection and resettlement systems. More specifically, we made the following two asks:

- That Canada would increase resettled refugees (Government-Assisted and Privately Sponsored Refugees) to at least 15% of the total Permanent Resident (PR) admissions.
- That Canada would, as a special initiative, increase the 2025 immigration targets for resettled refugees to a level that will allow the large, accumulated backlog to be absorbed. As a matter of equity, Canada should ensure that refugees are not waiting longer for processing than economic immigrants.

Considering this, and in light of World Renew's long history as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) and as an agency of the Christian Reformed Church, we must express our deep disappointment with October's immigration levels announcement.

**The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue** is a place of conversation, learning and action on God's call to justice, peace and reconciliation. We are a ministry of the Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, a denomination of more than 250 churches and ministries and across the country, including a strong partnership with World Renew Canada, our international disaster response and development agency. We also collaborate deeply with ecumenical justice organizations in Canada.

Seeking Justice, Speaking Hope

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To see the total number of *Refugees and Protect Persons and Humanitarian Compassionate and Other* reduced by 24% is particularly discouraging to us and our sponsors as it comes at a time when, as the UNHCR reports, there are over 39 million convention refugees from around the world seeking safety. It is further disheartening that in 2025, the resettlement targets make up only 9.7% of the overall PR target.

World Renew works with sponsoring groups across Canada, representing a large and diverse cross-section of Canadian society including Christians, Jews, Sikhs, and Muslims, as well as humanitarian charities and organizations that have no faith ties. These sponsors have private funds, housing, and robust settlement teams ready and waiting to welcome the refugees they are sponsoring, and they are committed to and supportive of a strong refugee welcome system in Canada. However, October's levels announcement, and particularly the 17% reduction in the Private Sponsorship of Refugees category, will not reduce the backlog of approximately 100,000 applicants. Refugees will be waiting even longer than the already too-long average waiting period of over 2 years. Even more concerning is that this will leave refugees who are already in vulnerable situations at even greater risk.

This, in combination with IRCC's announcement last week that Group of 5 and Community Sponsor sponsorships will be paused for over a year leaves us deeply troubled.

The ultimate impact of these policy decisions is, again, born by refugees themselves. While World Renew's international development and disaster response work has an overarching goal to partner with local communities so that they flourish, we also see myriad situations in which refugee resettlement is the only durable solution and we wish to see Canada as a strong partner in being part of that solution.

In this season of Advent and Christmas, when our faith community particularly remembers the birth of Jesus, who himself experienced forced displacement along with his family, we write as a community across Canada that would like to see our country re-extend our welcome in ways that seek a wise balance of justice and the wellbeing of all.

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As we wrote in our last letter, safety, welcome and justice for vulnerable displaced persons is a vital humanitarian responsibility that we consider to be sacred. We continue to wish you and your colleagues God's blessings of wisdom and discernment for this essential work of welcome and justice.

Respectfully,



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Christian Reformed Church



Jamie McIntosh  
Executive Director  
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Rebecca Walker  
Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement  
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