

Minister  
of Citizenship  
and Immigration



Ottawa, Canada K1A 1L1

Ministre  
de la Citoyenneté  
et de l'Immigration

MAY 23 2014

MAY 20 2014

**Reference: File #C-14-004**

His Worship Robert Bratina  
Mayor of the City of Hamilton  
Office of the Mayor  
71 Main Street West, 2nd Floor  
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Mr. Mayor:

The Office of the Prime Minister has kindly forwarded to me a copy of your letter of February 28, 2014, concerning your request that the federal government establish a regularization program to assist residents with undocumented status in Canada. I apologize for the delay in responding.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is committed to maintaining the integrity of Canada's immigration programs. While I recognize the vulnerability of those with expired statuses, non-status individuals are recommended to return to their country of origin and apply for permanent residence through the appropriate legal means. Rewarding individuals who do not comply with immigration laws would create a question of fairness for those applicants waiting to be admitted to Canada legally.

Canada continues to rank among the world's most generous and fair countries for vulnerable populations and ranks number one for resettled refugees per capita. As you may know, the *Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act* came into effect December 15, 2012, and will make Canada's asylum system faster and fairer. Under the new system, genuine refugees fleeing persecution will receive Canada's protection much more quickly, while those with unfounded claims who seek to abuse our generous system will be removed faster.

One year following the implementation of the reforms, the number of new asylum claims from designated countries of origin had decreased to historical lows; they dropped by 87%. It now takes, on average, two months for the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) to hear these claims, as opposed to the approximately 20 months that claimants waited before the reforms. This means that genuine refugees are now able to begin their lives in Canada sooner. Removals from Canada of failed asylum claimants are also occurring much faster. While failed claimants often waited around 4.5 years under the old system, often after a number of unsuccessful appeals, removals are now occurring in about 23 days from the time the case is referred.

Canada 

The overall reduction in asylum claims has already resulted in greater than anticipated savings to Canadian taxpayers of more than \$600 million in provincial and federal government welfare, education and health-care costs. Overall savings are projected to be more than \$1.6 billion over five years.

We are pleased to see that following these reforms, Canada's asylum system is a success. Genuine refugees are getting the protection they need sooner, failed asylum claimants with unfounded claims are being removed more quickly, and Canadian taxpayers' generosity is no longer being abused.

Thank you for writing and bringing your concerns to our attention. I hope that the above information is helping in clarifying the Department's position on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Alexander', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Alexander, P.C., M.P.  
Canada's Citizenship and Immigration Minister