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Canada has issued more international student permits this year than in same period last year

By **Clayton DeMaine, True North Wire** - July 25, 2024

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The Liberal government is showing no signs of slowing its student visa program despite vowing to reduce the number of international students it brings into Canada.

Citing housing and cost of living issues and abuse of the student visa program, the government previously committed to lowering the number of temporary residents in Canada, though more international study permits have been approved so far this year than in the same period last year.

According to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, Canada approved 216,620 study permits for international students in the first five months of 2024. In comparison, 200,205 international student permits were issued by the same time last year.

Liberal Immigration Minister Marc Miller committed to reducing the number of temporary residents in Canada from 6.2% of the

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population in 2023 to 5% over the next few years.

In January, the government also vowed to cap the number of international students, which it said would reduce new study permits by 35%.

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Immigration lawyer Sergio Karas thinks the program is “out of control,” saying the government is granting study permits “like it’s going out of style.”

“They need to have a moratorium on the program for a couple of years until they get a handle on all these numbers,” he told True North.

The IRCC’s figures show that 682,430 international students held new study permits in 2023. According to these numbers, the government would have to issue 238,851 fewer new study permits than it did last year to reduce the number by 35%, as the government vowed to do.

The government is already almost halfway to its goal of issuing under 443,580 new permits five months into 2024. Notably, trends in the IRCC numbers show that the second half of the year tends to have more new permit holders than the first two quarters of every year.

The immigration department and Miller did not respond to True North’s requests for comment.

Last week, Miller said in a Bloomberg interview that the international student program was being used as a cheap pathway to permanent residency and citizenship in Canada. Karas said this attitude has to stop.

“They need to devise a program where the international students that come in understand that not everybody is going to be a resident,” Karas said.

He thinks the government should link the international student program to skills that the Canadian economy needs, such as medicine

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or the trades.

“Regional agents are promising the students residency in Canada. They come with false expectations,” he said. “They’re taking courses that are typically useless to the Canadian economy, and then they expect to become residents. When they don’t, they throw a tantrum.”

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The chart also shows an increase in students being imported from countries such as China and India.

From January to May 2024, Canada has taken in 91,510 international students from India, more than any other country. During the same period last year, Canada took in 85,805 Indian students, an increase of 5,705, or 6.3%.

Indian students received over 40% of new study permits issued last year.

Behind India is China, from which Canada has taken in 20,965 new students, a 25% increase over the 15,595 permits issued to Chinese students during last year’s first five months.

Karas is concerned about the influx of students from countries whose governments are adversarial to Canada, such as Iran and China.

“We need to be very careful with what Chinese students are studying because, as you know, China is now a strategic enemy of the West. The government of China is involved in industrial espionage,” he said. “If they want to study something like nuclear engineering or something like that, I think we should be very concerned about allowing them to do that.”

He worried that Canada’s enemies would return to their countries with knowledge that could benefit them militarily.

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