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Canadian Politics | Immigration

Immigration Minister says Ottawa will not be granting residency status to illegal immigrants

By **Quinn Patrick, True North Wire** - August 3, 2024

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Source: Facebook

Immigration Minister Marc Miller confirmed that the government has no plans to give residential status to illegal immigrants in Canada.

The Trudeau government had initially planned to "explore ways of regularizing status for undocumented workers who are contributing to Canadian communities" in 2021 but are now acknowledging that it's not a desire for most citizens.

"As frustrating as that is to hear for people that are in a precarious position of being undocumented in Canada and are contributing to the economy — and perhaps kids that are Canadian — I think we have to be quite clear with Canadians and quite realistic about what's achievable," Miller told CBC News.

"Despite the economic imperative, despite the very humanitarian imperative that a broad regularization program presents, it is clear to me that Canadians are not there and that's just reality."

The Immigration Department estimates that there are approximately 300,000 to 600,000 illegal immigrants currently residing in Canada.

Immigration lawyer Sergo Karas said that the government must first get a handle on how many undocumented migrants are in Canada before it can begin discussing issuing statuses.

"The government has no idea how many undocumented migrants are in Canada, so the discussion about granting them status outside the regular immigration process is premature," Karas told True North.

"Many of the people illegally in Canada are failed refugee claimants who have gone underground, overstaying visitors, and foreign students whose permits came to an end and were unable to apply for permanent residency."

Karas agreed with the government's latest stance, saying that granting them amnesty would be an "affront to the millions of immigrants who followed the law and paid their dues."

"It is also an invitation to others to flaunt deportation and removal orders to bide their time and wait for the next amnesty. It is bad policy,' he said.

Ottawa pledged to reduce the number of temporary residents from its current share of 6.2% of the population to 5% by 2027.

"I think we have to be quite practical and realistic about whether we can achieve that in a way that demonstrates to Canadians that we're capable of doing that in the next year," said Miller.

While the government is rescinding its plans to give widespread resident status, Miller said that he was still "actively considering" making status exemptions for migrants working in sectors like healthcare and construction, which are facing desperate labour shortages.

However, Karas said reviewing illegal immigrants for certain sectors would only lead to a further expansion of Canada's immigration bureaucracy and divert resources from other "worthy immigration programs."

He said that the "cost would be staggering" considering the "Liberals already expanded" the program "by 42% since the pandemic."

Karas also noted that granting residency to certain sectors may open the door for those looking to exploit such exceptions.

"The idea that preference can be given to illegals who work in specific economic sectors may create many "new workers" who will claim that they work in those industries," he said.

"It will open Pandora's Box for unscrupulous individuals to "create jobs" for their friends and relatives and will spur a cottage industry where people will be willing to pay for employer confirmation letters and the like. It will become a nightmare."

The Department of Immigration did not respond to True North for comment.

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