

Immigration lawyer warns taking in Gazan refugees presents “serious security risks”

By Clayton DeMaine, True North Wire - May 20, 2024



Sergio Karas, a Canadian citizenship and immigration lawyer, warns of the potentially disastrous consequences of the federal government’s [plan](#) to take in refugees from Gaza.

In an [Op-Ed](#) published by the Macdonald Laurier Institute, Karas raised the alarm about welcoming a population which could have ties to terrorist organizations and, more generally, harbour antisemitic views.

He warned of a need for strict security measures due to an increase in illegal [anti-Israel encampment](#) protests and [antisemitism](#) in Canada.

“We are dealing with a population that needs to be vetted in a very stringent way,” Karas told True North in an interview. “We don’t want to end up with somebody slipping through the cracks and then finding out that they have connections to Hamas or to any of the other terrorist organizations that are operating in Gaza.”

Karas highlighted a [survey](#) from March 2024, which found 71% of people in Gaza and the West Bank endorsed Hamas' Oct. 7 terror attack, 59% had a preference for Hamas governing Gaza, while only 5% of Palestinians viewed Hamas' actions on Oct. 7 as a war crime.

"We have to ensure not only that (refugees) are not outright terrorists, but also that they are not connected to any type of militant group because that can spell another trouble for Canada," he said.

In the article, he said school teachers in the West Bank and Gaza have repeatedly been implicated in [endorsing violence](#) against Jews, propagating anti-semitism and [military-style training camps](#) for children.

He also noted that Canada's intelligence agency warned of a rise in [violent extremism](#) in the wake of the Oct. 7 attack and that its terrorist threat agency warned of future [domestic attacks](#) motivated by the Israel-Hamas conflict.

"When you start importing people who have antisemitic views in particular, it fuels antisemitism in the country," Karas said.

Karas thinks Canada should follow Australia's lead and "put on the breaks" for accepting visas from the "troublesome region."

Australia cancelled the visa program, which would have brought at least [600 refugees](#) from the region, just as they've done with Ukrainian refugees, but changed their minds after discovering how complicated the vetting process would be.

Concerns over illegal border crossing methods muddled the immigration process, which led to [visa cancellations](#) by Australia.

"It's not like letting somebody in from a country with a proper infrastructure,

where things can be checked. This is very haphazard," he said. "The last thing you want to find out is that people have gotten in who have terrorist ties."

He said once terrorists are in the country it is a complex and drawn-out process to kick them out.

He gave examples. [Helmut Oberlander](#), a German Nazi, was only deported 35 years after living in Canada. [Léon Mugesera](#), who incited genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda, took over a decade to be deported from Canada. And [Mahmoud Mohammad Issa Mohammad](#), a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine member who was convicted for his role in a terrorist attack in Athens in the 1960s, was deported after 26 years of legal battles.

"Alarmingly (Mohammad) not only managed to mislead Canadian officials about his identity and terrorist background, but he also took advantage of Canada's slow legal process to prolong his stay significantly even after being ordered to be deported," Karas said in the article.

"One of the biggest problems is that Canada has a history of not being able to get rid of bad apples quickly," Karas told True North. "We need to be super careful and attentive, with security screenings to ensure that nobody who has questionable ties gets into Canada and uses Canada as a base or just to hide or, worse, come in and engage in kind of nefarious acts."

In March, Immigration Minister Marc Miller said the government would allow [more than the originally stated 1000 refugees](#) from Gaza into the country, though [none have made it to Canada](#) yet.

Karas thinks it's absurd that the Liberals would raise the immigration cap on a program that failed to bring anyone over the first time.

"I have a funny feeling that this has to do with Mr. Trudeau's, coveting the Muslim vote for the election," he said. "Because I don't understand why they would spend money and resources on a program's failure."

Author

Clayton DeMaine, True North Wire