



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Mike Morrice
Member of Parliament

The Honourable Sean Fraser
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

May 18, 2023

RE: Immigration Measures for Sudanese-Canadians and their Families

Dear Minister Fraser,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to share significant concerns and recommendations to improve the current immigration measures in place for family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents who have departed Sudan, on behalf of the Sudanese Canadian Association of Waterloo Region and constituents in Kitchener Centre with Sudanese-national family members.

I understand and appreciate that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has responded to the Sudanese community by putting in place a series of temporary immigration measures to support immediate family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents that will be in effect from May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024. I also strongly support and appreciate IRCC establishing a pathway for Sudanese-national family members to obtain fee-exempt temporary resident permits to travel to Canada, in addition to, once in Canada, to access fee-exempt open work permits or study permits or to submit a fee-exempt permanent resident application under the family class.

However, organizations and constituents in my riding have expressed significant concerns about the effectiveness of IRCC's temporary measures and the IRCC's overall approach to assisting individuals impacted by the Sudanese conflict thus far. To address this, I would encourage you to:

1. Expand the definition of "family member" for those eligible for temporary immigration measures to include parents, siblings and grandparents.

Family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents who are eligible for IRCC's temporary immigration measures are restricted to only a spouse or common-law partner, a dependent child, or a dependent grandchild. For many Canadian citizens and permanent residents with Sudanese family members, this restrictive definition prevents them from assisting other immediate family members, such as their parents, siblings, and grandparents, who face grave risks to their safety and well-being because of the continuing conflict. Just this morning, I spoke with a woman whose 75-year-old mother, a Sudanese-national unable to benefit from IRCC's temporary immigration measures, is dependent on her to the same degree that a child who is currently eligible for expedited processing would be dependent on a parent.

Expanding the definition of eligible "family member" under the temporary immigration measures is achievable through a simple amendment to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations. I urge you to implement this change, or explore other alternative options to expand the

family member eligibility of IRCC's temporary immigration measures, to allow for additional immediate family members of Sudanese-Canadians to benefit from Canada's much-needed assistance.

2. Prioritize and expedite processing of Sudanese private refugee sponsorship applications.

Organizations and constituents I have met with have informed me that Canadian citizens and permanent residents with Sudanese-national family members who are not under IRCC's temporary immigration measures have turned to Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program (RHRP) in hopes of bringing their family members to Canada from safe third countries as soon as possible. As you know, RHRP private Sponsorship Agreement Holders, often religious, ethnic, community and humanitarian organizations, work to identify refugees for resettlement from outside Canada.

The benefit of using the existing RHRP for Sudanese-national family members who are not eligible for IRCC's temporary immigration measures is that no new processes need to be established to facilitate their travel to Canada. However, private refugee sponsorship applications under the RHRP can take a considerable amount of time to process. I applaud IRCC for the steps it has taken to expedite applications and document requests for Sudanese-Canadians and eligible family members, and I urge IRCC to similarly prioritize and expedite the processing of Sudanese applications under the RHRP to directly assist those Sudanese-national family members who are currently not eligible for IRCC's temporary immigration measures.

3. Assess the possibility of providing financial support for travel and accommodations costs.

I am aware that the Canadian government has been working to assist Canadian citizens and permanent residents to depart Sudan for a safe third country since the outbreak of the armed conflict on April 15, 2023, with these individuals responsible for their onward travel to Canada. Additionally, Sudanese-national family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents are currently only eligible for a fee-exempt temporary resident permit to facilitate their travel to Canada if they are outside of Sudan in a third country and if they left Sudan on or after April 15, 2023.

In either case, Canadian citizens and permanent residents, and their Sudanese-national family members, have been left to cover the full cost of third country accommodations and travel back to Canada. I have heard that those fleeing Sudan have dealt with unjust price gouging for accommodation and travel services, drastically inflating their costs at a time of already heightened vulnerability. I urge your department to explore all available options to provide financial relief for unreasonable travel and accommodation expenses these individuals have incurred.

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I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this ongoing crisis and to work with you to more effectively tailor IRCC's temporary immigration measures to the needs of Sudanese-Canadians and their families.

Sincerely,



Mike Morrice
MP for Kitchener Centre